



**AUSTIN
PARKS
FOUNDATION**



**The Trail
Foundation**



**Seaholm Waterfront Planning Partners Meeting
June 9, 2017
Umble Conference Room
Meeting Notes**

Attendees:

Planning Partners

Downtown Austin Alliance – Mandi Thomas
Shoal Creek Conservancy – Joanna Wolaver
Waller Creek Conservancy – Melissa Ayala
Office of Sustainability – Lucia Athens
Economic Growth and Redevelopment - Greg Kiloh
American Institute of Architects Austin – Murray Legge
Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce - Karlie Ramirez
Mayor Pro Tem Tovo, Austin Parks Board – Rick Coffey
Asian American Resource Center – Calvin Chen
Austin Public Library – Blair Parsons

Invited but unable to attend:

*Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association – Chris Riley
*Bike Austin - Carson Chavana
*Tejano Trails – Laurie Rentoria
*Lower Colorado River Authority – Clint Harp
*American Society of Landscape Architects – Melissa Robledo
*Austin Community Foundation - Mike Nellis
* Preservation Austin – Kate Singleton (OOO), John Donisi, Board Chair
* Six Square - Nefertitti Jackmon

Project Team

Austin Parks Foundation

Collin Wallis, CEO
Katie Robillard
Allison Watkins

The Trail Foundation

Brian Ott, Interim Executive Director
Beth Carroll, Project Manager
Heidi Cohn

Studio Gang

Gia Biagi
Chris Bennett
Valentina Mele

GO collaborative/Civic Collaboration, Public Engagement

Lynn Osgood
Diane Miller

City of Austin Parks and Recreation



Kim McKnight, Project Manager

Cara Welch

Brianna Case

Giant Noise Public Relations

Elsa Morales

Project Overview:

Brian Ott welcomed group and provided an overview of the project.

- Partnership with Trail Foundation and Austin Parks Foundation in collaboration with Austin's Parks and Recreation Department (property owner).
- Develop concept plan; emphasis on how to implement
- Gathered input at Whole Foods event and Midnight Margarita Run.
- Distributed input-gathering event morning of June 24 at four locations.
- Asking this group to provide input on the process, including public engagement, and to help us get the word out.

Overview of Project Process:

Gia Biagi provided background on Studio Gang, prior projects, project approach.

- Emphasis on building relationships and partnerships; Reach people who are never asked
- Look at both program and ecology; understand civic assets; reimagine programming and architecture
- Go from aspiration to implementation; test out ideas; set the table for policy; proof of concept
- Review everything from past input; discover themes and points of convergence; categories of activities; spur ideas people may not have thought of
- Deliver design possibilities; short / medium / long term; interventions along the way

Planning Partner Comments:

Individual written comments in response to: "What would you like to see happening at the site?"

- A place welcoming to children and families
- Food and drink
- A place to stop and stay a while
- Seaholm eco-district info link to neighborhood
- Water dock used
- Coffee shop
- Fishing
- Water transportation and recreation hub
- Rooftop use
- Wedding venue
- Yoga on the rooftop
- Kids playing
- Emphasis on civic component, limit monetization of space/site
- Less is more design approach
- Diversity
- Lakeside lounging and rooftop lounging
- Boat dock
- Good connection to Seaholm (north of cc)
- Lake activity rentals and access
- Bike station
- Boardwalk along the water
- Café and patio boardwalk
- Interpretive center



- Coffee and wine all day
- Float up / rollup snack bar
- Place for arts (music, gallery)
- Library / PARD programming
- Visitor history information
- Water taxi dock
- Rooms to hold events / meetings
- Amphitheater
- Dock for water access
- Cultural activities
- Center for citizen science
- Food and drink
- Bike station - showers and lockers
- Calm area of respite relax on deck
- Wine and food
- External scope to include Shoal Creek peninsula
- Music
- Restaurant
- Large deck
- Restroom
- Improve existing trail by it (safer)
- Public event space – music, cultural celebration
- Public access (versus all private events)
- Open up to lake (deck?)
- Interpret ecological / culture history
- Tell the story / mechanics of intake
- Multicultural experience
- Play scape
- Exhibit space
- Area for fitness activity, yoga, etc.
- A space for all (not limited to a few)
- Water taxi landing
- Facilities / bathroom
- A way to enjoy the water / view
- Film screening space

Kim from PARD commented on the parameters that were essential to guide this project:

- Protecting the public interest / this is parkland
- Accessibility
- Flooding considerations
- Historic district
- Sustainability / part of Ecodistrict
- Long term economic sustainability
- Strategic approach to public private relationships
- Civic asset

Overview of Public Engagement Process:

Lynn recapped the two rounds of public engagement:

Round one:

- Initial input to gather broad range of ideas; focus on “verbs”; what do people want to do.
- Emphasis on Civic nature of the space
- 4 locations gathering input at tables on June 24, have model, Ipads with survey
- Efforts are designed to be playful
- Online survey

Round two:

- Reflect back on what we’ve heard; themes
- Drill down further
- July / August time frame

Feedback from group on process and groups to reach out to:



- Arts and music organizations (Fusebox; Austin Creative Alliance)
- Tenants of Seaholm / local businesses (Athena / Gables Residential)
- Ecodistrict working group
- People who don't come downtown
- Get a bus ; do a tour of the site
- Recreation centers; locations that are pick up for summer camps
- Start from what you heard in the past (fourth process; not starting from scratch)
- Concern about leaving so wide open when gathering input; people may have unrealistic ideas and be disappointed; need for practicality guidelines and education
- Do education about history of building; here to serve public; now way we're serving is changing/transitioning – focus on sustainability; Adaptive reuse

Discussion of Qualities of Public-Private Partnerships:

Group discussed some experiences with public private partnerships:

- Work with partners up front
- Will likely be a “mash up”
- Need to look at long term operation
- Need to consider funding
- Look to successful local examples (Umlauf, Republic Square, Zilker Garden, Waller Creek, Walter E Long)
- People are concerned with commercialization and privatization of park land
- Not a lot of “old” money in Austin
- Need to have a “balance”
- Work with foundations up front
- Need to account for long term maintenance.
- Flexibility
- Earned income and figuring out how to fund something over it's lifetime
- Look for small victories, make progress by doing smaller efforts
- Getting the vision and mission right, does not mean the building has to be focused on first
- Taking care of outside areas—just as important as the building itself
- Keeping the public in the loop about why PPP; partners involved; education, data, building trust

Final Comments:

Brian advised the initial study will be about 6 months. Will look at financial models. Expects there will be multiple ways we can move forward generated in the concept plan. Will share notes with group. Will convene this group again in round 2 of the process.