MEMORIAL PARK

PUBLIC UPDATE MEETING 2

ORGANIZING THE SITE:
WHAT GOES WHERE?

White Oak Conference Center
November 10, 2014
6:30–8:30 pm
CLIENT INPUT

Memorial Park Conservancy
Uptown TIRZ
Houston Parks and Recreation Department

BERG OLIVER (ECOLOGY)
JOHN JACOB (SOILS)
HUNT DESIGN (WAYFINDING)
SHERWOOD DESIGN ENGINEERS (CIVIL ENGINEERING)
sUSAN TURNER ASSOCIATES (HISTORY)
THE LIGHTING PRACTICE (LIGHTING)
ETM ASSOCIATES (O & M)
Eotech Panel

PUBLIC INPUT

RESEARCH

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Houstonians Speak Up to Renew Memorial Park

In 2013, the Memorial Park Conservancy and its planning partners, Houston Parks and Recreation Department, and Uptown TIRZ, launched a citywide public input process to connect with current and future Memorial Park users. Multiple formats were used to offer all Houstonians opportunities to contribute their viewpoints, including **large public open houses, small workshops, and 24/7 engagement through a Memorial Park Tomorrow website and social media presence.** The input from all of these, have enabled the team to understand ways that people use the park now and would like to in the future.

The following broad **public priorities are the result:**

**Access**
Accessibility is valued highly, including: entry points to the Park; connectivity with other parks and parts of the city, via foot, bike, car, and mass transit; and improved parking. Ease of facilities use.

**Balance**
Balance—between nature and recreation, and among the needs of all “users” (human and animal).

**Enhancement of Existing Character, Amenities & Usage**
Preserve and enhance Memorial Park’s role as an “urban wilderness”. Upgrading existing amenities and add restrooms and drinking fountains.

**Safety & Security**
Better safety/security at night and for families; safety for the various types of users; management of vehicle/bike/pedestrian traffic.

**Communication**
Need for stronger communication, including: ample and clear signage and messaging about Park offerings, ongoing public input/involvement.

**Long-term Sustainability**
Preservation and protection of flora and fauna; a resilient ecology; employment of sustainable practices; and “green” facilities.

**Individual & Community Enrichment**
Easy to connect to other Houstonians as well as to the story of Houston, including: education programs; ways to experience the Park’s location; ways to socialize with others and feel sense of community.

Made possible with generous support from the Baxter Trust
Guiding Principles:

**TEND**
Memorial Park needs our care. Let’s be good stewards.

**MAGNIFY**
Memorial Park has a lot going for it. Let’s make those things more visible.

**OPTIMIZE**
Memorial Park’s parts are out of balance with each other. Let’s arrange them so the park can function optimally.

**RECONNECT**
Memorial Park is divided in many ways. Let’s make it whole and plug it into life in Houston.

**REVEAL**
Memorial Park holds stories relevant to all Houstonians. Let’s tell them to the world.
Pre-1900: Undivided Land

- West of Houston’s developed extents, yet to be touched by infrastructure or the thought of a park.
- 1834: Reinerman Tract claimed (image right)
2010: 25 Parts

- The Living Bridge is constructed.
- Picnic loop is connected to Memorial Drive at a second point further east, creating another fragment.
VISION: RECONNECTED PARK

- Stitch fragments together with contiguous spaces that feel like a cohesive park
- Limit visual and pedestrian boundaries within the park
- Maintain existing programmatic elements of the park
VISION: LIMIT AREAS OF FUTURE IMPACT

- Areas in red indicate places that have been heavily impacted by previous development excluding areas that are culturally or historically sensitive
- Goal: limit future development to areas that have already been altered by past development

Legend
- Orange: Areas for future impact
- Gray: Historical & Cultural Resources
- Dark Gray: Land impacted by foot traffic only

Image: 2014 Google Aerial Photograph; Data: HRA Gray & Pape "Intensive Archaeological Survey of a 1.3-mile segment of Buffalo Bayou in Harris County, Texas" with Roger Moore Archaeological Consulting; Susan Turner Associates; and Berg Oliver

SCALE: 1:24,000
2014: EXISTING SITE ORGANIZATION

- The park is currently experienced as a series of smaller and discontiguous uses and typologies.
GOAL: CONNECT ACTIVE RECREATION AREAS

- Relocate active recreation such as baseball, rugby, and soccer that require more infrastructure and amenities such as parking and bathrooms
- Combine areas of similar program, use and ecological, cultural, and historical experience
- Share recreation amenities for minimal impact on park and ease of maintenance

Image: 2014 Google Aerial Photograph; Data: Houston Parks and Recreation Department and aerial photo analysis

SCALE: 1:24,000
GOAL: LOCATE PICNIC AREAS THROUGHOUT PARK

- Picnic areas become moments to experience different parts of the park
- Accessible by car, bike, foot, or wheelchair
GOAL: CONNECT LAND MASSES

- Create trail areas that connect large swaths of the site, allowing for longer and more rich park experiences and greater ecological connectivity.
- Bridge currently divided parts of the park with green spaces trails that are appropriate to ecologically and historically sensitive sites.

Legend

- Active recreation
- Relocated active recreation
- Urban Wilderness (trail use)
- Connected wilderness areas
- Arboretum & Nature Center
- Cultural & Historical Resources
- Dispersed picnic areas

Image: 2014 Google Aerial Photograph; Data: Houston Parks and Recreation Department and aerial photo analysis

SCALE: 1:24,000
VISION: COHESIVE PARK PROGRAMS & EXPERIENCES

Envisioning a park that:

- Preserves and interprets Camp Logan’s richest and most productive archaeological areas
- Embraces the signature existing cultural and ecological resources
- Creates expansive, connected, and complimentary program areas that provide a cohesive experience of this 1500 acre park

Legend:

- Active recreation
- Relocated active recreation
- Urban Wilderness (trail use)
- Dispersed picnic areas
- Camp Logan interpretive areas & Historical entrance experience
- Golf course
- Arboretum & Nature Center
Berg Oliver’s preliminary assessment of areas negatively impacted by recent drought and hurricanes.
By examining historical patterns of vegetation, soils, hydrology, and existing site conditions, Berg Oliver developed these preliminary recommendations for the park’s restoration strategy.
Plant Community Restoration Typologies

**WOODLAND**
- 100-150 trees/acre
- 25% shrubs
- 25% herbaceous

**SAVANNAH**
- 50 trees/acre
- 20% shrubs
- 70% herbaceous

**PRAIRIE**
- 5-10 trees/acre
- 20% shrubs
- 80% herbaceous
The design seeks to reconnect what is now a patchwork of ecological corridors. Continuous flows of water, wildlife, and plant communities will be restored through restoration of four restoration types:

1. Riparian forests along water ways
2. Pine/Hardwood Forests at park edges and in areas physically appropriate to forest restoration
3. Savannah landscapes in much of the rest of the park
4. Discrete Native Prairie near the center at the highest point on the site.
While road and rail networks are integral parts of Memorial Park and the park’s history and current use, they interfere with how the park functions as an ecological whole and how people and wildlife experience these ecological zones.
Starting on the west edge of the site, Memorial Park Drive is realigned to hug the west boundary of the park.

New bridges allow for physical connection between the North and south for water, wildlife, and people.
An access road and pedestrian bridge over the railroad would allow for further pedestrian connection between the east and west sides of the park.
The picnic loop is removed to enable connection between the eastern and western halves of the south side of the park.

Picnicking would be distributed throughout the park.
Memorial Drive is reconstructed with a bridge over the main ravine, or barranco, allowing for a north-south connection for pedestrians, wildlife, and water.
East Memorial Loop drive is reconfigured to consolidate park fragments and create larger, usable central areas for program.
A land bridge across Memorial Drive connects the northern and southern halves of the park.

A unified park experience and ecological corridors are created.
Active recreation fields, tennis center, and driving range are consolidated in the northeastern section of the park, adjacent to existing roads and development.
Gather Storm Water for Ponds, Irrigation & Ecological Health

Two existing ponds in the golf course are expanded and two new ponds are created to collect and store site water.

Water will be used as amenities: beautiful ponds as well as for irrigation of the golf course, ballfields, and lawn spaces.

These ponds will double as wildlife habitat.
A bridge at the east end of Memorial Drive provides another safe connection between north and south for pedestrians and a celebrated entrance to the park.
Memorial Park’s First Master Plan
1924 Proposed Entry & Gardens by Hare & Hare Landscape Architects

Create a clearing in the forest.

Legend
- Riparian Forest
- Pine-Hardwood Forest
- Pine-Hardwood Savannah
- Native Prairie
- Naturalized Golf Course
- Wet Savannah and Prairie
- Bog Areas
- Ponds and Stream Corridors

Great Lawns, Gathering Spaces
The northwest quadrant will retain Equestrian trails. A physically and visually disparate Cycle Track that replaces the Picnic Loop will solve user conflict.

An equestrian center adjacent to the polo grounds could house possible Community Riding Programs.
Wide and dense forested buffers at the edges of the park create a sense of immersion in landscape spaces along the more urbanized edges.

A landscaped berm on northern edge at I-10 will help to buffer noise and pollution.

Legend:
- Riparian Forest
- Pine-Hardwood Forest
- Pine-Hardwood Savannah
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- Naturalized Golf Course
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- Bog Areas
- Ponds and Stream Corridors
Currently separated from the park, this will become an iconic entry. It provides access from the west and the south to the Arboretum and the park beyond.

This site will provide pedestrian and boating access to the bayou.
Access trails are added to Hogg Bird Sanctuary. Invasive species are cleared from the understory, allowing for healthier habitat and forage for native bird species.
Dispersed parking lots provide improved access to park activities. Parking along Memorial Loop Road is removed, allowing for two way traffic and a more park-like feeling. Discrete parking areas now provide access to all parts of the site.

The proposed parking design provides no net loss in parking.
Vision: A park that balances a more resilient natural environment, improved recreation and amenities, and the site’s rich history and setting.

Legend
- Riparian Forest
- Pine-Hardwood Forest
- Pine-Hardwood Savannah
- Native Prairie
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Existing Trail Network

- Multi Use Trail: 12.5 miles
- Bridle Trails: 1.5 miles
- Arboretum Trails: 6 miles
- Outer Loop: 1.25 miles
- Tex-DOT Trail: 1.75 miles
- Cycle Track (picnic loop): 1.25 miles
- Seymour Lieberman Trail: 2.9 miles

Total: 27.15 miles
Proposed Trail Network: 50+ miles
Pedestrian Trails: 40+ miles
Connectivity Network: 7.5 miles
Seymour Lieberman Trail (SLT): 3 miles & Timing Track: .25 miles
Bayou Trail: 3 miles, Other Hiking & Running Trails: 8 miles
Arboretum Trails: 8 miles
Cycling Trails: 30+ miles
Connectivity Network: 7.5 miles
Memorial Loop: 9.5 miles
Cycle Track: 1.5 miles, Kids Loop: .25 miles
Dedicated Mountain Bike: 8.5 miles, Kids Mountain Bike Zone: 1 mile
Equestrian Trails: 3.5 miles
Sports Complex

Existing Features to Remain
Sports Complex

Vegetated Berm and Buffer Planting
Blossom and Arnot Multiuse Space

Multiuse Trail
Land Bridge and Memorial Groves

Existing Features to Remain
Land Bridge and Memorial Groves
Land Bridge and Memorial Groves
Land Bridge and Memorial Groves

Multiuse Trails
Family Recreation Area and Southside Trailhead

Existing Conditions Aerial Photo
Family Recreation Area and Southside Trailhead

Mountain Biking Trails
Family Recreation Area and Southside Trailhead

Hiking Trails
A STORY OF THE PARK: PEOPLE IN NATURE
INITIAL DESIGN CONCEPTS
Wednesday, September 17th, 6–8 pm
The Eldorado Ballroom
2310 Elgin St.
Houston, TX 77004
HOST: Council Member Dwight Boykins (District D)
CO-HOST: Council Member Robert Gallegos (District I)

ORGANIZING THE SITE: WHAT GOES WHERE?
Monday, November 10th, 6:30–8:30 pm
White Oak Conference Center
7603 Antoine Dr.
Houston, TX 77088
HOST: Council Member Brenda Stardig (District A)

SPACES AND PLACES: HOW WILL IT LOOK?
Monday, January 12th, 2015, 6:30–8:30 pm
Moody Park Community Center
3725 Fulton St.
Houston, TX 77009

THE PROPOSED PLAN: MEMORIAL PARK TOMORROW
A PLACE FOR ALL HOUSTONIANS
Monday, March 9th, 2015, 6:30–8:30 pm
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Brown Auditorium
Caroline Wiess Law Building
1001 Bissonnet St.
Houston, TX 77005
HOST: Council Member Ellen Cohen (District C)
CURRENT PROJECTS AT MEMORIAL PARK

- The new 4500 square foot Running Trails Center opened in October

- Over 100K trees were planted earlier this year in Memorial Park

- Currently over 200 acres in the park are being treated for invasive control

- A robust tree inventory and flora/fauna count is underway

- Maintenance has been increased on landscaped areas and gardens The Seymour Lieberman Exer-Trail will be refurbished

- Repair on South side trails will begin shortly including improved signage and wayfinding

- A waterline will be brought into the park to help with irrigation and firefighting