

CITY OF AUSTIN
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION



AGENDA ITEM NO: _____ 30
AGENDA DATE: 7/29/99
RCA TYPE: Resolution
PAGE 2 of 3

The master plan for Town Lake Park has been developed through a consensus based, community assisted process with wide public involvement. At approximately one month intervals the consultant team has held public meetings and workshops that have been attended by hundreds of Austinites. Weekly a stakeholder group, representing park users, facility users and neighborhood interests, has met with City staff to guide the process. The resulting plan represents an amalgam of community input and professional recommendations aimed toward developing functional and attractive cultural facilities within what the Master Plan describes as a "cultural park that is the jewel of the Austin parks and open space system, the center of Town Lake, a city-wide focus for cultural events, and that provides a major open space that is close to and connected with several neighborhoods and downtown."

The City has committed to bringing the new Community Events Center on line by July 2001. This action would approve a conceptual plan for development of a Community Events Center in Town Lake Park and direct the City Manager to initiate Land Development Code amendments to accommodate this project.

Cost, Cash Flow and Phasing: The original cost estimates developed for the project were \$40,000,000 for the Community Events Center and parking garage, and \$10,846,000 for park development. Through the Master Plan development and building programming processes these estimates have been refined. The Community Events Center and parking garage, as designed to meet the programmatic needs and conform to the Master Plan, has an estimated cost of \$46,885,000. The estimate for all the park development recommendations in the plan is \$21,099,825 (present dollars). These estimates do not include the cost for an alternative that would reconfigure and realign Riverside Drive as a park carriageway.

Cash flow projections (attached) provided by City of Austin Finance and Administrative Services indicate that a total of \$15,000,000 (present dollars) could be made available for park construction by FY 2012-13. This includes an interagency loan in the first year (FY 1998-99) of \$3,000,000. The Master Plan identifies items that might be suitable for a "donation program" to fund the approximately \$6,000,000 shortfall. Additionally, as the cash flow projections indicate that funding will accumulate at a rate of about \$1,200,000-\$1,400,000 per year, the Master Plan proposes five phases of park construction of \$3,000,000 to \$5,000,000 at two to five year intervals.

Riverside Drive: It is the recommendation of the Master Plan that a section of Riverside Drive between the Community Events Center and Lee Barton Drive be closed. This closure will greatly enhance the functionality of the park and safety of park users, especially children. A second though less attractive alternative is to allow westbound travel on Riverside via a roadway reconfigured as a park carriageway. While still bisecting the park, this roadway would be designed to slow and tame traffic, and possibly lowered to reduce its visual impact on the park. It is the staff recommendation that further analysis and testing of alternatives be performed, and that a decision on the closure Riverside Drive be made after the completion of the Downtown Access and Mobility Plan and the completion of several development projects, including the Community Events Center and garage and the first phase of the CSC project.