

Gravel Lot to Undergo Construction This Summer Improvements Include Multiple Entrance Points, Water Drainage, and a Water Quality Control System

AUSTIN (April 25, 2018)—Austin Parks Foundation (APF), in partnership with the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) and C3 Presents, announced today the funding of a construction project that will vastly improve the usability of the Stratford Drive lot that sits on the closed Butler landfill.



The site is comprised of three to six feet of clay/dirt as a cap with landfill garbage underneath. Due to landfill restrictions, the lot has limited uses, so it will be classified as a Parks and Recreation service area. It will continue to serve as an area available for use of Zilker Park patrons and surrounding attractions, as well as for the special events held at the park throughout the year.

"Austin Parks Foundation is proud to be able to make these needed improvements to the Stratford lot. Not only do they prevent further disruption and erosion of the landfill's cap but the improvements also address critical drainage issues," said Colin Wallis, Austin Parks Foundation CEO. "Our goal is to protect Zilker Park by giving the thousands of weekend visitors to the park, Zilker Botanical Gardens, Austin Nature and Science Center, and the Butler Trail a usable area under all weather conditions."

After an exhaustive study by global design and engineering firm Atkins and discussions with various City Departments and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, it was determined that improving the current lot, which sits on the Butler landfill cap, was the best plan for the site. The construction project will formalize the stabilization of the surface of the landfill cap making it more usable than in its former or interim condition with an all-weather surface.

"Many years ago, this area was a quarry which was then filled with city trash and covered over in the 1960's," said Scott Smiley, Atkins division manager and vice president. "Though additional material was added to the landfill cap in the early 2000's to prevent water from infiltrating into the trash below, use of this area has often been a muddy mess. We are confident that the improvements that will be made to the area will allow for the best use of the space and that these efforts will go a long way toward protecting the cap and surrounding parkland."

Additional improvements include adding multiple entrances to the lot from Stratford Drive and possibly Lou Neff Road. The project will also include drainage improvements to remove standing water on Stratford Drive and on the landfill cap as well as reduce the flow of water across the cap and into the landfill below. Based on City and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality regulations, a water quality control structure will be installed to remove pollutants in run-off from the stabilized surface prior to discharge to Lady Bird Lake.

"The Parks and Recreation Department looks forward to creating a user-friendly space that meets the specifications and criteria of all partners involved in this important project", said Kimberly McNeeley, acting director of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department.

This project will also incorporate improvements to the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail for the portion of the trail bordering Zilker Park. The improvements follow The Trail Foundation's master Ecological Restoration Guidelines and include adding a new berm and trees along the trail, preparing the area for a future trail head and working through a variety of ecological needs.

"We know from our counting mechanism that trail usage increases by 250% during ACL Fest, so we are excited to continue our partnership with Austin Parks Foundation and work with C3 Presents to further The Trail Foundation's ecological restoration goals and protect and enhance the trail in this extremely popular area," says Heidi Anderson, executive director of The Trail Foundation. "In addition to this new work, funds from ACL Fest, through the generosity of Austin Parks Foundation, have also supported our work at the Boardwalk, Johnson Creek Trailhead, and the Congress Avenue Bridge, and we are grateful for the support."

The improvement project is scheduled to begin this summer and will take a few months to complete. The project will be funded by Austin Parks Foundation with funds from the Austin City Limits Music Festival. A maintenance agreement is currently under development.

