

# **EastLink: TAG and PALS Meeting #2 Presentation**

Parque Zaragoza Recreation Center, 2608 Gonzales Street, Austin  
— Wednesday, September 25, 2019 —

## **SOUTH TABLE**

Moderator: Rachel Winston

Recorder: Alex

Members:

David Capucino - retired Zaragoza supervisor was here for 20 years

Jenn Massing Harris - Neighborhood association

Jesus Mendoza - President of East Cesar Chavez Merchant Assoc. Aka Mr. Natural

Kate Mason Murphy - Educational Representative

Larry Murphy - taught school here for 20 years - active transportation network

Felipe Garza - SA to Austin since mid 80s. Worked here at park in summer and Austin High - does art murals and part of art commission

Michael Monreal - wants to hear about community

Gavino Fernandez - he is land owner - native - parks and rec for 17 years - connected to LULAC - youth academic programs - academic for college bound - AISD

Yolando Capucino - came to school in the 70s to UT. 45 years - worked 30 years in East Austin School

## **NOTES**

**Introduction and Welcome:** Ladye Ann Wafford

Asking for Input on what the trail actually becomes and what stories are told.

What would the people like the trail to bring to the community?

**Update on Interpretive Placemaking Plan:** Jana McCann - Project Manager

**Update on Community Engagement:** Meredith Powell and Miriam Conner

Their roles; project community engagement goals

- Broad Diversity of Users

- Ensure engagement is community and asset-based

- Stay rooted in history

**Developing a Wayfinding Plan:** Leslie Wolke

**Evolving the Interpretive Framework and Interactive Sessions:** Erin McClelland

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Think about:

Do you feel like stories apply and relevant to community and neighborhood  
Are these important stories to highlight?

Discussion

## PART I

Recreation, socializing, cultural events as themes

- Pan Am used to be the only place in the neighborhood with A/C. The rec center would close from 12-3 pm and the kids would enjoy the breeze during that time.
- First rec center 1944 in Zaragoza Park. David Cappuccino was park manager from early 1984 to 90s. New center built in 1996.

This park - people speak of other parks such as Metz and Hillside. Zaragoza is the mother park of the hispanic community so it has rich 90 year history. Threads, except for landscaping, Significance of park historically needs to be emphasized. The others are sisters and brothers. This has been forgotten about.

Most centers had advisory boards and they need to be identified and spoken about. They put on the programs, special events, fundraisers. We were staff support. Their involvement. Important of naming names.

Historic stroll is something coming early 2020. Gloria Pennington has archive documents. Scanning in documents with names from 1941 to 2010. Person wants to do memorabilia - can be preserved in mural. Community advocates and advisory board memorialized. Get advisory board to get back involved?

Back in the day it was utilized for fiestas. As time progressed the declined. One of the reasons was that parks and rec can make money too. Increased fees. So people stopped coming.

As time went by, parks and rec did not' support advisory boards as much. In the 70s they were important to make things happen. Advisory board got bond through. Got park developed. Also dpt should return to advisory boards in the future. Lost support - needs to come back.

Important to acknowledge the people, labor, advocacy, activism to make this place what it is.

Location in the South - Power plant provided good jobs. Lots of contention in 1994. Close down the dirty coal plant was one view. One student had grandfather, uncle, father that were able to live there and their people were going to be run out. Government jobs provided decent wages and life. Grandparents of young girl lived short walking distance. Shouldn't forget the coal history of electricity, jobs, and railroad spur that allowed coal to get here. Pedernales right away turned into a free network for transportation.

Another perspective was that the power plant needed to be shut down because loud and disturbing. When growing up one couldn't have a conversation because plant was 225 decibels.

The rail spur for trolley could be used for transportation. Went from electric to parks and rec. Knock down the gates and connect to trail.

One person lived six blocks away and couldn't sleep at night. Suggest community jams or different voices to talk about differences. Record different perspectives through oral and written histories. Create a network to join communities whether you are on the north side or south side. Through library systems along corridor - 32 park rec centers - get advisory boards involved. There is a youth advisory at givens - good way to get the kids involved. It could be a vehicle for children voices community/neighborhood book of remembrance. Intergenerational engagement is important. History of each of rec centers. Each center features the voice of neighborhood. Similar problems, connections, interests. Metz was mine, pan am was mine, that was my place. Empower voices and build pride in neighborhood with athletics or beyond it.

## PART II

Activism and grassroots organizing to achieve meaningful change. 1928 Masterplan institutionalized segregation in Austin. East Side centralized services, then the city didn't provide services. Outcome of concentrating people of color on east side and forged social bond. Challenged institutional racism. Created for themselves that government wasn't providing.

Brown berets are an area to investigate that are missing. More people need to be included.

Environmental justice and activism.

Metz had first mural and then changed the name of Pan Am and added the mural.

Some murals are connected with app and artist tell what it was about. Working with youth, they have an easy time working together. Back then rec centers would work together. Advisory board pushed out and profits are important. Advisory board were not allowed to raise funds anymore. Only people that could do fiestas would be the ones with money. They used to be good when had support of city. They provided scholarships and programs. Gov supplemented baby sitting for GED because needed in community.

Activism is called civic engagement in west austin. Activism has negative connotation. Being involved in community as an advocate - they paint as activist - Dorothy Turner.

Tried to host an event at Zaragoza, with months of planning. Reenactment with General Zaragosa but needed \$14k of permits. Can't do it because of permits. \$4k to have fire dept to see if site plan had appropriate exit. Permits are a barrier.

My voice matters with kids - two communities sometimes - adult baseball could play for causes and raise money.

This building was built on the softball field. Baseball field was black football, adult amateur baseball, soccer, multipurpose field. Now run by RBI. Community doesn't have access to that field anymore. No practice field on grounds. Families want to stay here but no access.

Is there a way to waive permit fees?

Sports as a way to connect different centers. Sports connect to history.

Boggy Creek is known as the panama canal. All cement. When building it, tree huggers wouldn't move. Congressman Pickle brought them it. It would flood big time. Army corps of engineers designed it, tore down trees in Govalle and when they came here they didn't want to tear down trees. That's why Boggy Creek isn't as wide. No more flooding but kept the trees. When people caught wind the activist forced people come to protest.

La Loma - the hill was what this was known as.

Haskell - trail runs into Riverview. Signs will be helpful, the runners. It ends and then begins again at Metz park.

Slaughterhouse by railroad tracks. Pleasant Valley and take a big breath then run all the way on track to 7th Street bridge to avoid smell. Where Capital Metro is now. Chemical stores - San Saba smelled badly. Buy anything for their yards. In the barrios, homeowners - grandmothers would compete for rose bushes. Food forest by RBG. But back in the day a source of pride.

Oral interviews of people would be good.

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## **CENTRAL TABLE**

Moderator: Miriam Conner

Recorder: Laura Cruzada

Members:

Miriam Conner, Public City

Sarah Marshall, PARD

Michelle Slattering, McCann Adams

Neal Whetstone, City Council District I

Carl Settles, E4 Youth

Christopher Stanton, Ghisallo Cycling Initiative

Volma Overton III, ETSMA

Nina Renaldi, Parks Board

Raasin McIntosh, Raasin in the Sun

Archer

Harrison Eppright, Docent Sixth Square

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# Theme 1: Recreation and culture – outdoor rec, socializing and cultural events have been key to East Austin residents' community heritage and identity building.

EC: does this resonate with anyone?

- YES; Grew up across pan am – had AC, so we hung out there when it was open and stayed on the porch when it wasn't. Rec center and swimming pool were big in the community.
- Early 2000s huge concerts at Rosewood Park – Jump On it.
- First rec center was built 1934; David Capucino was park supervisor for rec center in early 80s through 2005, and it was through the community doing Fiestas and fundraising getting the current rec center being built.

EC: Associated storylines

- Music and concerts at Rosewood Park, Parque Zaragoza
- Organized sports
- Neighborhood pools and community gardens
- Continued connections to the outdoors (Mueller southwest Greenway)

Any stories that you didn't hear that Erin didn't mention or that stood out? (Miriam, M)

- Rosewood Park - Juneteenth celebration amazing event every year. (Volma Overton III Orbitson)

Are there any spaces along the trail that have deep history within the community? (M)

- Downs Field where Satchel Page first played baseball. (Volma Overton III)
- Want to know history of Jump on it and how far it goes (Nina Renaldi)
  - o [Jump on it and Juneteenth] Becomes block party in park, lots of big music, camping (Christopher)
  - o 1930 was first year of Juneteenth celebration (Sarah Marshall)
- Gilbert Barrera grew up at Boggy creek; wasn't always a park was a neighborhood before Army Corps dredged it up.
- Sat nights at Givens park was hang out spot for East Austin. In Early 90s there was a flood that took out the bridge at the park. Once that bridge was destroyed (Volma Overton III), the city of Austin didn't repair it for 10-15 years which put an end to Sat night gathering spot. (Volma Overton III)
- Percentage of black people in Pflugerville is 17 percent; all the people go back generations feel they have been pushed out. There are so many layers and people who've been displaced that

still have a connection. Have to somehow talk about that and help people understand. People come here and have no idea what was there. There need to be ways to remember and also forge what the future will be like (Carl)

- Places torn down (Raasin) – need a way to bring that back to life; have to tell that story through landmarks.
  - o Old Anderson high school

Are there places that have been torn down? (M)

- Used to be a massive incinerator where city fleet yard; people used to get rained down with ashes. (Volma Overton III)
- Yellow bike was on Thompson. (Christopher)
- Chemical plant up until 15 years ago (Carl)
- Jacob Fontane started 3 churches in Austin; served in legislature. Grave is unmarked. You can go back many layers. So much to unpack. (Carl)
- Yellow Jacket Field, Night Train Lane, Hollywood Henderson. (Christopher, Volma Overton III, Neal)
- Army Corp demolished Boggy Creek neighborhood. (Christopher)
- Stone cutting yard. You can dig down and see multiple layers of different stone. Granite pieces of rock (Christopher)
- Pharmacy
- Fire Station (now a carwash) 1952 to late 70s (Harrison)

Any other historic spaces around the trail? Restaurants? (M)

- Chitlin circuit, Hoe's Row (Volma Overton III) – was a little mini Harlem

END

**Erin: how was this process; anything to modify?**

- Was telling other people's story. Need to invite them to this to get their story. (Volma Overton III)

## Theme 2: Environmental Justice and Activism – East Austin communities of color used activism and grassroots organizing to challenge institutional racism and achieve meaningful change.

EM: Does this resonate with anyone?

- Granddad was president of NAACP; got the community together to as one to rep the east side to fight the at large system (Volma Overton III)

EC: Associated storylines

- Segregation and geographic isolation, 1928 master plan; Hispanics also moving to East.
- Strong social bonds (business districts/entrepreneurs, mutual support and social welfare organizations) – to create what the city was not providing. (Holy Cross Church creating hospital.
- Community activism challenged environmental racism (Jesse Segovia, Jorge Guerra, Edward Rendon, Susana Alamanza and PODER)
- Grassroots organizing to achieve equal access to facilities and amenities (1<sup>st</sup> branch library – Carver, Parque Comal, Pan-Am Rec Center)

Are there any stories that were left out? (M)

- Downs Field (Harrison Eppright)

Are there any activists in Sixth Square?

- Dr. Edward H. Givens, park named after him; Dentist, friend with Mayor Tom Miller and Sam Rayburn, Lyndon Johnson. Responsible for first black fire fighters (Harrison) – Austin was first city in South with black fire fighters 1952.
- Kenny Durham – jazz trumpet player seen as Miles Davis of his time 1950s. (Carl)
- TD Bell – first electrified blues guitar player; taught all of the black blues musicians -WC Clark, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Blues Boy Hubbard. (Carl)
- Harold McMillen – Kenny Durham’s Backyard & Blues Family Tree Project which captured oral histories for 100s of musicians
- Arthur D. Witte revitalized NAACP after WW2. Ran for city council and almost became a councilmember 1951; scared city so much that it established the at-large system 1953. (Harrison) – side note: would be interesting to see what the Districts were before compared to now (Michelle)
- Jacob Fontane of 1800s was a slave of Rev. Edward Fontane which was one of first rectors of St. David’s Epis. Church. Upon his freedom, became ordained Baptism minister – maybe the first – founded many of the first black Baptist churches and founded *Gold Dollar* newspaper. Lived in Wheatville. (Carl, Harrison)
- U.V. Christian who lived on San Benard Street (Harrison)

Do you know about 1963 march that ended at Rosewood park? (Sarah Marshall)

- Would have been a huge deal, was integrated (Harrison)

Is there anything not there anymore? (M)

- Holy Cross hospital first hospital that employed black doctors and trained black nurses (Harrison)
- Moon tower at 12<sup>th</sup> and pleasant valley (Christopher)



# Closing/Share with Group/Feedback

## **SOUTH:**

- Need more funding for oral histories
- Wanted to listen, lots of words and push pull. As a business owner, want to see how we can help. Money a factor that business owners can help with. Like the idea of how they want to use baseball for South side of the link; like a baseball tournament to utilize the parks how they were meant to. Want to hear more about struggles for using the parks. . (Marcus, Mr. Natural, East Cesar Chavez Merchant Assoc.)

## **NORTH:**

- Neighborhood was post war neighborhood, lots of veterans and history still there. Airport retirees, etc.
- Didn't want to sugar coat history; complicated history.
- A lot of people don't realize the connection between black and brown community. It was strong but it sometimes gets left out. Guadalupe took Holy Cross in during renovations; grandmother used to teach Holy Cross to make tamales – didn't speak Spanish/English but still connected. "Tamales had soul to it."
- This area was prairies – a human construct → Tonkawas? (not sure if I heard that right.)
- Entry to Windsor park there is a historical marker about settler who was scalped. Neighborhood struggles to put that into context.
- What is important at that intersection? How to mark in some way to emphasize story?
- Bartholomew – reunions and churches, sports – first disc golf course, Dell soccer field.

## **CENTRAL:**

- Discovered a lot of hidden history; key pieces – deep history of music formative for east Austin and the country; nationally significant component – first black fire station in entire south; incinerator where fleet yard is. Rich history and evolution along this corridor that's important to get captured. (Christopher)
- Boat races along town lake (Harrison Eppright)

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**NORTH TABLE**

Moderator: Stephanie

Members:

1. Hector Martel (new resident, parent)
2. Jackie Brookes (new Windsor Park resident/VP of neighborhood assn.)
3. Raasin McIntosh (Windsor Park resident)
4. Shanina Delphini (resident)
5. Jeannette Swenson (resident)
6. Carrie Tate (citizen/board member of Miller Foundation)
7. Jim Adams (architect/planner)
8. Bob Foster (resident)

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## **INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK**

### **DRAFT Theme #1 - Recreation and Culture**

Outdoor recreation, socializing and cultural events - build community identity  
Community came together to build initial park

Audience Member note: First recreation center built in 1944. This funds for this recreation center was from money from fundraisers and fiestas.

Sports - Baseball games: Downs Field, Rosewood Park  
Pools and Community Gardens

BREAKOUT:

**ARE THESE RELATIVE TO YOU/YOUR COMMUNITY?**

**ARE THESE THE IMPORTANT STORIES TO TELL?**

Windsor Park is fairly isolated transportation wise, important that access goes in and out.

Stephanie - Lots of Community. So what do you all think about these stories?

2 - Has been diving into personal home history. House was owned by a Colonel, Purple Heart. Knows Bartholomew Park was built because of the military association?

3 - Places that bring people together, swimming pool, cultural center, but also the library.

Stephanie - There was a lot of diversity. Her grandparents bought their home in the late 60s, both Hispanic and Black area. Might have been different in other parts of the trail. Should that have a focus?

5 - When Bartholomew Pool was build 1968, first integrated pool. Something to note.

3 - Important not to sanitize the history. Need to somehow reflect back honestly on history.

8 - Miller Control Tower - background history. Some people may not know how the airport played a historical role near that airport tower.

2 - Knows the demarcation point and then the end at the lake. What are the thoughts of it ending at Berman and 51st. Seems arbitrary. Feels like there should be a pot of gold at the end. Is there a reason, why there?

Stephanie - Not sure, but thinking it may be because it's the youngest community.

1 - That intersection doesn't feel like the beginning of anything.  
(everyone laughs)

2 - Why not end it in the park?

6 - Noting the map shows yellow dots for wayfinding opportunities

1 - Scalping history. Will Barker monument. That's the type of historical marker that biases the incident for this one individual and doesn't place it in a context... we think they were just dividing up unsettled land, but there were families that lived here. And the marker has been moved. State historical marker - difficulty in moving it.

8 - Circle where the airport was. Small parking lot. Trees. You could always tell when people had parked under the trees at the airport because of the bird poop on the cars.

Stephanie - Do you have folks in mind you think we should interview? Suggestions? Doesn't have to be on the spot.

3 - The Pamerleau Family, the Krivoniak Families (Families we deep history in Windsor Park)

5 - East of Berkman, there is the plan for the Pamerleau Pocket Park - Family sold the land to the city to use as park space.

Stephanie - Does Harvest Fest still happen?

3 - No, not anymore, at least a decade.

Stephanie - I was told there's people from other areas that come to use these locations, like Bartholomew Park. Is that true?

1 and 2 - Yes, there's lots of interconnected usage among the residents.

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## **DRAFT Theme #2 - Environmental Justice and Activism**

East Austin communities of color used activism and grassroots organizing to challenge institutional racism and achieve meaningful change.

Associated storyline:

Community activism challenged environmental racism (e.g. Jesse Segovia, Jorge Guerra, Edward Renton, Susana Alamanza and PODER)

### **ARE THESE THE STORIES? HAVE I GOTTEN IT RIGHT/WRONG? ARE THERE OTHER PEOPLE THAT NEED TO BE INCLUDED?**

2 – Seems there's a dual theme here with the pool.

6 - What is the southern boundary of the park?

7 - Shows her.

Stephanie - If you were an upwardly mobile black in this community, where did you go? These communities were created. Her concern is parts of these stories will be left of out? How do we make sure these stories are not lost? What should be the focus?

6 - Does the airport really have a cultural history? What's important about that place that we know of? Was it important for the community in any way? What was this land before it was the airport? When you say this French Place - was the French naming important?

Stephanie - Said there was a cafe in the 1970s called the White Spot.

5 - Windsor Park was a middle class suburb. Reagan was a very middle class school. I'm wondering if people moved into Windsor Park, were they able to buy without difficulty? So did they come from other places in Austin, or were they retiring military retiring to Windsor Park area - maybe mostly white but also African American as well?

Stephanie - I know certain areas of Austin had certain amenities. I do know that White Flight was a big deal that happened in the Windsor Park Area.

3 - Into late 1960s, early 1970s, it was a predominately white neighborhood. At one point it became predominately black and then it was 1/3-1/3-1/3.

Stephanie - There was a strong military community. "White flight" was happening. Concern of airport flying planes only over black neighborhood/flight paths. Where they were allowing blacks to live in that white community.

7 - Airport Plan.

5 - Used to be more neighborhood cooperation/planning. University Hills and Windsor Park seem to work together.

6 - What about services from the city - the history of streets that weren't paved, or fire stations?

3 - The library. WP has a relatively new branch. It acted as a central point of activism to get city services.

5 - Activism behind Saving WP Library

Stephanie - I guess there were certain homes that people here on Asylum would stay in - sponsors - certain housing - folks from all over the world.

5 - Neighborhood President /handyman called to do repairs on home where a Congolese Family of 8 lived.

3 - Not sure there was designated housing.

1 - Knows that during Katrina, the population in the area swelled as well.

5 - The Delwood Little League - Big deal for the community. Huge gathering place in Bartholomew Park. Now they are starting a soccer program and have a designated soccer field. The Delwood Optimists ran it for years.

6 - Is there anything else about recreation, park lands?

2 - Disc Golf

1 - Agrees, Disc Golf

5 - A few holes got have gone missing and they were never replaced... so it's like a 15- rather than 18- hole course.

6 - Is it still used?

1, 2 - Yes always used. Especially on a Friday night.

5 - Talks about Elementary schools. WP Elementary is not on any closed list, thankfully.

1 - One of the unique things about WP is that there are a lot of immigrants, and the schools are very diverse. I enjoy that very much about the schools.

5 - When I lived here, NOBODY sent their kids to school in WP and now I think that is changing.

Stephanie - How about that Middle School coming to the Mueller area?

1 - Wants to make sure to be involved to make sure school stays diverse and reflects the diversity of the East side. Doesn't want to make the assumption that it's going to be.

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INTERPRETIVE THEME DEVELOPMENT - Next Steps

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## **NORTH TABLE SUMMARY/STANDOUT POINTS**

2 - Rich military history, airport, not sugar coating this area's rougher history

Stephanie - A lot of people don't realize the strong black - brown community connection. Churches that take in community members, etc.

3 - There were people that worked hard to keep this as a prairie - so it was a human construct.

1 - Historical marker of settler who was scalped. The marker was moved. It's very one-sided version of this story assuming the land was unsettled. We, as a neighborhood, have struggled to put that in context.

2 - Big question - What's the importance of that intersection being the beginning (or end) and how do we create a story around it.

6 - Bartholomew came up often in our group. The reunions, sport.

5 - The Delwood Sports complex. Addition of soccer field.