

VII IMPLEMENTATION

BRACKENRIDGE PARK

MASTER PLAN

The master plan identified a number of projects for full implementation. This section captures those projects, identified by timeline: near-term, ongoing, and long-term. In addition to these projects, park institutions have capital project initiatives specific to their campuses; those projects are not listed here.

NEAR-TERM CAPITAL PROJECTS

Several of the projects identified by the master plan are appropriate for completion in the near term, whether through city bond funding, private fundraising, city budget dollars, or other sources.

Upper Labor Interpretive Area

In a recent UTSA Center for Archaeological Research investigation, a head gate at the upper end of the Upper Labor acequia and a significant portion of what remains of the Upper Labor dam were found. Large solid cut limestone blocks placed on top of the Spanish Colonial dam in the late 1800s would be exposed for interpretation. The Upper Labor acequia channel walls will be repaired and restored to replace missing stone and spalling mortar. The project would also include improvements to nearby parking areas and roads.

Avenue A Hike & Bike Path

Avenue A south of Mulberry Avenue would be closed to vehicular traffic, except for emergency and parks maintenance vehicles and golf course maintenance traffic in favor of a more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly riverside trail. A small parking area would be created directly off Mulberry for access to the path. Invasive plant species along the path would be removed and replaced with appropriate native species.

New Pedestrian Bridge

A new universally accessible pedestrian bridge is proposed to provide a more direct access between Broadway, the Witte Museum, and the east side of the park near Tuleta Drive and the San Antonio Zoo and other destinations on the west bank of the river.

San Antonio River Wall Repair

For years, sections of San Antonio River channel walls have been failing. Several capital improvement projects have been initiated to repair wall sections that had failed, or were deemed to be a danger to the public. Many more hundreds of feet of walls are in need of replacement.

Zoo Parking Garage

The San Antonio Zoo, Sunken Garden Theater, and other destinations along St. Mary's Street suffer from insufficient parking. A new parking garage on San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) land would augment parking available in the park as well as support events at Alamo Stadium and SAISD's convocation center.

Work should also include several related projects:

- 1) reconstruction of the Hildebrand/Stadium Drive park entrance to accommodate future traffic;
- 2) construction of a bus staging area for use by park-serving institutions which receive heavy bus traffic; and
- 3) Alpine Drive should be transformed into a multiuse path which will connect the new garage with the Sunken Garden Theater.

Restore Pump House #1

Pump House #1 is potentially the oldest industrial structure in the city. Built as part of the Lacoste water works in the late 1800s, then incorporated into George Brackenridge's water works, the structure is a key part of the park's history. It is sited ideally for public-oriented uses which could include a café or coffee shop, meeting space, or an interpretational facility. Work should include restoration of the structure itself, following the Secretary of the Interior's Historic Preservation guidelines, restoration of the waterworks channel and installation of a historically-appropriate pedestrian bridge, and associated site improvements.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Fundraising and project planning are ongoing for projects in several specific areas: Miraflores, the Japanese Tea Garden, and the San Antonio Zoo perimeter. Fundraising and project implementation should continue for these projects on an ongoing basis.

Miraflores Improvements

Miraflores has its own master plan which identifies a set of significant capital improvements, including access enhancements, restoration of many of the Dionicio Rodriguez works in the site, reconstruction of some of the now-demolished historic elements, and re-establishment of the axes in the park. These improvements should continue to be implemented as funding is available, with the exception of the portions of the master plan which are superseded by separate improvements in the area of the Upper Labor dam and acequia.

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MASTER PLAN

Japanese Tea Garden Improvements

The Japanese Tea Garden also has a site-specific master plan, of which many elements have already been accomplished through a combination of private fundraising and public dollars. Work on those features should continue, in some cases (as with the improvements on Alpine Drive) in conjunction with other projects. Full implementation of the Japanese Tea Garden master plan is in concordance with this master plan.

Zoo Perimeter Enclosure Improvements

The zoo perimeter along St. Mary's Street and Hildebrand Avenue is currently treated as the back of the facility, but those are important park edges which must be treated as improved edges. As work on the currently-underway zoo master plan continues, strategies for improvement of those edges should be designed and implemented.

LONG-TERM PROJECTS

Some of the projects identified by this master plan must be implemented on longer timelines, either because of coordination issues or cost. These projects are identified below, grouped into sets of larger projects as appropriate.

Restoration of the Catalpa-Pershing Channel

The single largest project identified by the master plan is restoring the Catalpa-Pershing Channel to a more natural appearance, including removing the concrete lining, construction of multi-use paths both along and across the channel, restoration of native species, and establishment of new connections to Broadway and into the park. Reconstruction of portions of Lion's Field should occur at the same time.

The overall project scope was identified in the San Antonio River Improvements Project, though construction of other projects in the interim has changed what will be possible with this project. Raising water levels through check dams, implementation of a bypass from the San Antonio River to ease flooding issues and to keep water in the channel full time, and related improvements should all still be part of the project.

Renovate/Re-envision Sunken Garden Theater

The Sunken Garden Theater should be renovated to allow for a measure of all-weather protection from the elements for some areas (at least for the stage and a designated seating area) and shade for the entire seating area. Backstage facilities should be restored and improved, and access and parking issues should be addressed.

Construction of a New Playground

Brackenridge Park's two playgrounds are the city's most heavily utilized. A third playground should be located in the park, likely near the future Zoo Parking Garage to take advantage of that parking pool and the visitation to the zoo.

Path Connection to Headwaters

The San Antonio River Improvements Project identified the possibility of a trail connection below Hildebrand Avenue into the Incarnate Word University/Headwaters at the Incarnate Word area, and potentially further north into the Olmos Basin. Work on this connection – designation of its location and development of cooperative agreements with partners – should continue.

Project Advocacy

In addition to projects which are within park land, the master plan also identifies several projects which can directly affect the park but which are not on park land. The city and the Brackenridge Park Conservancy should advocate for and explore these projects in conjunction with partners. The projects include:

- Construction of a joint-use parking garage on private property
- Broadway improvements, including streetscape improvements, planting, parking, and other enhancements
- Construction of a parking garage at the DoSeum on the east side of Broadway, potentially incorporating public right-of-way