
Hatley Fields

From Alexandra Robinette [REDACTED]

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To Alun Thomas <athomas@rollingwoodtx.gov>; Makayla Rodriguez <mrodriguez@rollingwoodtx.gov>

Thank you for distributing, Makayla.

Mayor, Council, Parks and RCDC:

I have enjoyed participating in a number of great projects in Hatley Park that are a benefit to our community. I helped with the trail 17 years ago when I first moved to RW and joined Park Commission. I appreciate the willingness of Parks, RCDC and Council to support and fund these improvements for our neighbors and our park.

I have been asked to help strategize with consultants on a new parking plan, which is also directly related to the plan for more trees. The new parking plan under review allows for the same number of cars that have been counted on the busiest game days, but in a consolidated lot that includes the small dirt lot between Fields 1 and 2, and the longer lot between Fields 2/3//4/5 and the WHAC. This opens up the opportunity to remove the parking lot at the north end and restore that as green space for any number of uses. There are many stakeholders in a park, but the primary goal should be green space and the enjoyment of nature in all its forms. Limiting cars should be the first priority once the basic needs are met, which has the added benefit of making the park safer. I will be making this case at the Parks Commission meeting on 11/18/25.

The cost of creating formal parking at the north end might prove to be prohibitive regardless, but leaving it in the current state of disrepair and unsightly paving would be unfortunate. I'm hoping there can be a conversation about what the best use of that area might become as we look at all these things holistically. I've heard from RCDC on a number of occasions that before we spend more money in the park, we should be mindful of everything we are doing and how we are best serving the community's interests, needs, and the long-term viability. I'm assume council has heard this request.

I initially felt that we could work around the perimeter of our fields to address parking and trees, but if we get to a point that we want to add soil, sod and irrigation to the north lot, along with the proposal for a new irrigation system, and potentially new sod throughout, it seems like a good time to examine whether or not we want to put dogs back on mitigated soil where children are also playing. Similarly the challenge of even growing grass on heavy urinated soil is an on-going battle with nitrogen. There is a steady increase of usage for the off leash area, with 12-15 dogs rotating every 20-30 minutes during peak hours - that is somewhere around 50 dogs an hour, assuming two peak hours in the morning, one at lunch, and two more in the evening - potentially up to 250 dogs a day. That is a crap-ton of dog pee and poop every day. These numbers go up when Zilker Park is shut down during ACL and Trail of Lights.

I remember watching my kids and others occasionally sitting or laying on the ground during soccer practice (or even during games!) and plucking up the grass or playing with the dirt. Afterwards, snacks

would get dropped on the ground, picked up and stuck in mouths. If I had a young child signed up to play T-ball, or if I was still walking with my kids to our neighborhood park to fly kites, kick the soccer ball, throw the football, or have a picnic in the grass, I would never even want to set foot on the acre shared with so many dogs. Currently T-ball and dogs are sharing just under an acre, and we have about 1.5 acres total to divvy up. Let's give the dogs their own fenced area that is always their own - keep chairs, toys, dog bowls and urine all to themselves, never get run off for practice or games, borrow some shade from the perimeter of trees, and give the rest of the community access to their park.

Respectfully,
Alex Robinette

