

Staff: Thank you for your input to the Barton Springs Pool Master Plan. Responses to each of your comments is included below.

Citizen: 1. I don't want any of those big old trees cut down.

Staff: This sentiment is shared by many, including COA staff. However, the storm last Wed night/Thur morning highlights the need to assess the health of the big trees. The top of an old pecan next to the train depot blew out, narrowly missing the train station building but cut the power lines. Limbs have fallen off other trees in recent years, one even crushing a car in the parking lot during morning swim time. A goal here is to not denude the park of big trees but find out which trees are near the end of their lives and plant a new generation of trees for the future. A larger variety of trees is planned also.

Citizen: 2. Also the plan for the little wood on the south side is not right. We don't need paths and trails through it. Just get rid of the ligustrum japonicum and leave it as it is.

Staff: There is a need for a path from the south entrance to the pool deck that can be traveled by wheelchairs or strollers. The south side lawn is too steep for such a path. The south side woody area is not currently utilized but contributes to the natural setting of the pool and particularly the south side. Ligustrums and poison ivy are difficult to remove. Our goal is to enlarge the pool grounds so more people can enjoy this wonderful site, make it accessible to those needing assistance, and have better line of sight from the main bathhouse to the south gate. Plans for the trail and how this area will look have not been developed.

Citizen: 3. Most urgent problem though - KILL THE ALGAE! What happened to the water this year?

Staff: Algae is part of any aquatic ecosystem. We see variations in algae growth in BSP depending on the time of year and amount of spring discharge. Spring and summer are periods when algae growth can be explosive. This year, there have not been any scouring flood events, spring discharge is declining (due to lack of heavy rain), and temperature and sunlight are increasing. In the long term, greater development in the watersheds feeding Barton Springs (Barton, Williamson, Slaughter, Bear, Little Bear, and Onion) will contribute greater nutrients to the system making algae control more difficult. We are currently testing a water re-circulation system to see if it might be used to control growth of algae in some areas of the pool but the result may be a tradeoff of one algae for another. We will also be studying returning some natural creek flows to the pool under certain conditions to hopefully help control algae growth and sediment accumulation. However, these are not likely to help during times of sparse rainfall.