



Brush Square Plan Implementation

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Brush Square is one of three remaining historic public squares from the 1839 Waller Plan for the City of Austin. The [Brush Square Plan](#) was adopted by City Council in 2019. Phase I implementation of the plan began in November 2019.

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Brush Square Vision Plan image

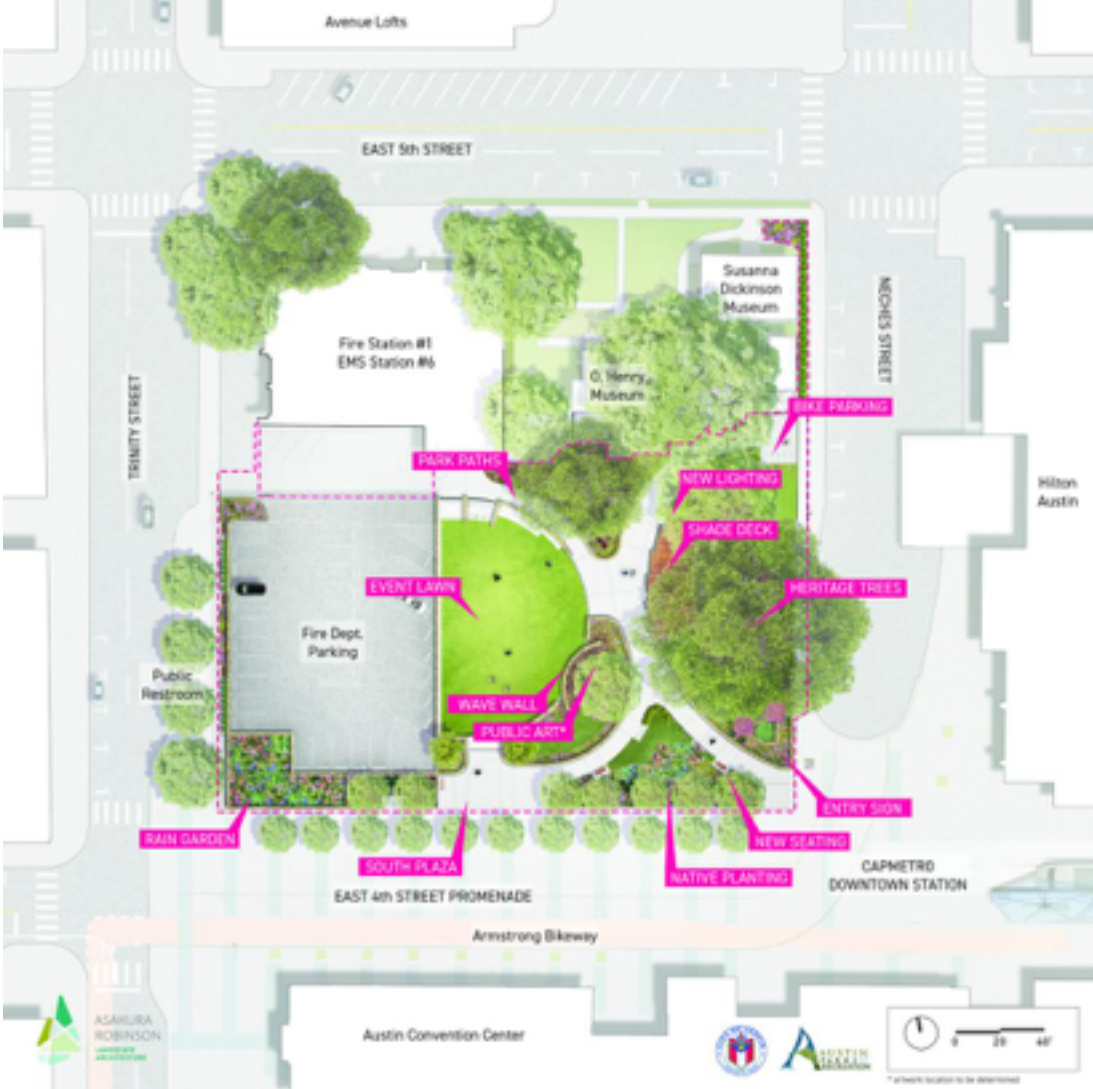
Project Description

The City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) launched a vision planning effort for Brush Square in spring 2018. The approved 2019 Plan resulted in the funding to begin a Phase I Implementation Plan.

Phase I Implementation Goals

The Phase I plan includes the following goals:

- Improvements to the sight lines and circulation through improved grading and drainage.
- New walkways lead park users through the site while maintaining an ordered pattern for circulation.
- An expansive event lawn that allows for the O. Henry Pun Off storied history of events to continue with room to grow.
- Low walls and raised decking provide ample seating opportunities for park users while maintaining safety through with new lighting, benches, and landscaping.
- A reconstructed parking lot for Fire Station #1 provides improved short-term use while providing areas for enhanced rain gardens and storm water treatment areas.



Brush Square illustrated site plan

Background

Brush Square is one of the three remaining original downtown squares as envisioned in Edwin Waller's 1839 plan for Austin. Brush Square is named for Seba Bogart Brush, a merchant, who used the Square to store cotton prior to his death in 1874.

Brush Square currently hosts the former residence of the author William Sidney Porter, better known as O. Henry, who resided in Austin (1893 and 1895, relocated to Brush Square in 1934); the former home of Susanna Dickinson, a famous survivor of the Battle of the Alamo (relocated to Brush Square in 2003; and the Central Fire Station No. 1, built in 1938. The [O. Henry Museum](#) and [Susanna Dickinson Museum](#) are operated by PAR. The Fire Station was designed by Edwin Kreisle and Max Brooks and remains an important example of Art Moderne style. It is still in operation as a fire station.

During the 1950s much of Brush Square was used as a parking lot. In 1969, the Parks and Recreation Board, with support from the Heritage Society of Austin, rejected a City of Austin plan to convert the site into a "fairly pleasing parking lot," marking the beginning of the contemporary era of maintaining the park as a public open space.

In Spring 2018, the planning process began for the Square and was adopted by City Council in 2019. Phase I Implementation will begin fulfilling the vision of the 2019 Plan.

Anticipated Phase I Implementation Schedule

- Implementation Project Initiation:** November 2019
- Construction start:** January 2022
- Construction completion:** December 2022

Partnerships and Potential Impact

PAR is working with the Convention Center, Downtown Austin Alliance, CapMetro and other organizations to ensure the viability and long-term sustainability of Brush Square for all users. Current funding through the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) is the primary driver for the Phase I Implementation.

Discussions are underway to work with the Convention Center and the Transportation Department to identify relocation options for Austin Fire Department and EMS personnel during construction.

Funding and Resources

The funding for this project is made possible through Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funding to support projects and initiatives that meet allowable uses as defined under Chapter 351 of the Texas Tax Code. HOT revenue is an essential tool for the promotion of tourism and supports the growth of the tourism, convention and hotel industry. PAR is an important partner in this effort as public parks, museums and cultural centers are among the top tourist attractions in the City.

Contact Information

For more information, please contact Scott Sinn, PAR Project Manager, by [email](#) or phone at 512-974-9474.

Brush Square Planning Process

The [Brush Square Concept Plan*](#) (PDF) was adopted by the Austin City Council on March 28, 2019. Explore the [final Concept Plan* Report](#) (PDF). Additional Information about the planning process is below.

- [Future Concept of Brush Square](#)
- [Final Concept Plan* Report](#) (PDF, 7 MB) (Adopted March 28, 2019)

* Please note: In 2020, PAR shifted from using the term "master plan" to describe all planning projects to other phrases that were more descriptive and could be used to identify the level of the planning process. For more information, please visit the [Project Terms and Definitions webpage](#).

Project Background

Project Goals

Community Engagement

- Related Links**
- [PAR Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism](#)
- [Susanna Dickinson Museum](#)
- [O. Henry Museum](#)

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