

Agenda Item: Discuss and Consider the East End Lagoon Business Plan and Next Steps (Sheryl Rozier, 10 minutes)**Overview:**

In 2015 the City of Galveston placed the management of the East End Lagoon (EEL) and the East End Lagoon Committee (EELAC) in the hands of the Park Board and provided financial support of \$75,000 a year for three years (2015-2018). These resources were matched dollar for dollar by the Park Board with outside grant funding to 1.) remediate marine debris at the Boddeker boat launch, 2.) repair & create parking, 3.) produce 'shovel ready' plans for an open-air interpretation center, 4.) secure a commitment for \$1.4 million grant for construction of the open air interpretative center, and 5.) build ADA interpretive nature trails. At the conclusion of the three years, Council asked the Park Board to define the resources necessary to sustain the park/preserve over the next several decades.

To date the Park Board and EELAC have been operating and making decisions for the EEL based on the Post Ike master plan commissioned by the City with stakeholder support and completed in 2010 by AECOM. This plan focused on the development of a regional Education Center and accompanying trails and observation towers. The plan envisions significant parking (400 peak), enclosed, climatized space for retail, classroom and exhibition space (15,000 sq. ft.) and overnight camping (150 spaces). Envisioned revenue drivers included tent camping, meeting space, parking fees, education programs and retail. In the final phase of the project, an estimated 50% of costs would be recovered and the forecasted \$500,000 annual deficit would be raised through grant writing and fundraising efforts.

The Park Board tasked EELAC to review and update the previous plan and develop a vision for the East End Lagoon that facilitates low impact recreational access, minimizes climatized construction and generates user fees to recover as much of the operational and maintenance costs as possible.

In April of 2018 and with grant funding from the Kempner Foundation, the Park Board entered into an agreement with PROS Consulting, Inc. for an updated Business Plan with a minimum five-year vision and revenue/expenditure pro formas.

At the February 6, 2019 EELAC meeting a completed copy of the plan was presented with a unanimous motion to accept the plan, produce a handout for community education and ask the Trustees for their financial and institutional support. This plan focuses revenue generation around user activities such as enhanced fishing, education and RV Camping. Recommended amenities include an offshore fishing structure, 65 space overnight RV camping facility, trailheads and walking trails and one, 2897 square foot open air interpretative center. In the final phase of the project (year 8), an estimated 100% of the debt service, operational and maintenance costs would be recovered.

Staff is presenting to the Board of Trustees on February 26, 2019 for their concurrence for the discussions with the City Council at the February 28, 2019 joint workshop meeting.

- Accept and endorse the Business Plan as the guiding document with the stipulation that additional due diligence including a wetland delineation with the USACE will be undertaken to guide the development of channel side fishing and RV Park amenities;
- Support and endorse the acceptance of RESTORE funding for the construction of open-air interpretative center and;
- Request \$50,000 a year from the City budget for the EEL for the next eight (8) years.