Project Goals

The Trail Conservancy (TTC) is seeking designers and creatives to take part in a bench design competition aimed at creating an exceptional experience for the new Longhorn Dam Pedestrian Bridge. This competition seeks to bring forth a designer or a team who can create uniquely designed benches to enhance the experience of being on the bridge and in the park space and entice donors to dedicate a bench and proudly display their name on it. The design shall include the following aspects: aesthetics, comfort, functionality and durability.

RFQ Part One
Summer 2023

This Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will establish a short list of designers (3 or more). Each designer selected to be short listed will receive a stipend of $1,000 for preparing and submitting their bench concept design for Phase Two.

Qualifications for the Phase One RFQ will be due in four weeks after release. Responses are limited to one designer or one design team. Interviews may be held to create the short list. Only one stipend will be provided for the team, not individually.

A pre-proposal meeting will be held for all interested persons to ask questions.

*Please note that we are not asking you to propose ideas for your project with your initial RFQ response

RFQ Part Two
Fall 2023

The short listed designers will be asked to submit their concept designs for the benches. A selection committee of TTC staff and TTC Projects Committee members will review the submittals and select the winning designer.

The winning designer will enter into a contract with The Trail Conservancy for a total of $20,000 to be split into phases, see page 4 for more details.

To Apply Online:

Longhorn Dam and Bridge Site
Provide two prototype bench designs that relate to each other: one backed, one backless. If selected, these will be fabricated as 30 new benches at the new Longhorn Dam pedestrian bridge.

The new bridge area encompasses several neighborhood areas, linking East Austin between Longhorn Shores, Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Metro Park, Lakeshore Park and the decommissioned Holly Power Plant.

The Holly neighborhood was historically the cultural and family home to generations of Mexican families. The Holly Street Power Plant was built in 1958 and operated for 47 years. Since the 1980s, the Holly Power Plant Decommissioning Committee’s countless hours of activism, community participation, and vigils ultimately led to the plant closure in 2007. The outcries of these brave Committee members served as a public voice for the neighborhood. The official decommissioning of the plant occurred in 2017.

In tandem with this effort in 2010, Austin Energy funded the Edward Rendon Sr. Park at Festival Beach Vision Plan, which was adopted by the Austin City Council in 2014. The vision plan included pedestrian and cycling improvements at Pleasant Valley Road. The Butler Trail and the parks that this bridge will serve will see over 4.9 million visits per year. This bridge will also have a new gateway (new and wider bridge) to Roy G. Guerrero Park to the east.
TTC started this program in 2018 with the first phase of the Boardwalk benches. Studio Balcones designed three phases of furniture for the Boardwalk which included backed and backless benches. TTC partnered with the Austin Parks and Recreation Dept. (PARD), Public Works, (PW), and the Urban Forestry Grant Program on the first phase of benches that utilized various reclaimed wood materials. Reclaimed bald cypress wood from the 2015 Wimberley Floods was used as the material for the second bench phase. Hatch Workshop was the fabricator of both bench phases.

**Information**

50% of the benches will be installed at opening (15 benches) and will be a combo of backed and backless.

- Requesting two variations that should be designed to relate to each other - one backed and one backless.
- Include either wood or steel or both;
- Include local materials and recycled/reclaimed content; wood should be reclaimed or recycled.
- Size reqs: approx. 6’-8’ long bench
- Arm rest requirements: When designing phase 2 of the boardwalk benches, we discussed the potential need of arm rests with PARD. We decided to design an arm rest, but not fabricate it at first and evaluate the need in the first year.
- Wood types to avoid: white oak, live oak, and post oak (as learned through the Boardwalk Ph I bench project)
- Embrace diversity, Accessibility and Universal Design

**Logistics for Installation:**

Detailed coordination with TTC, Urban Trails, and Pard Public Works on the design delivery and installation of the benches.

Since the bridge is not built yet, we will use the construction plans to determine bench locations. We plan to deliver and install the benches prior to the bridge opening to eliminate night installation.

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Two Part Design Contract

Phase One:
August through October 2023
Deliverable: Schematic design package for TTC’s use;
November 2023 through 2024
$6,000 - refinement of concept design; preparation of design packet to be
used for potential donors

Phase Two:
Fall 2025 through 2026
Deliverables: Design Development drawings and construction
documents (will work with fabricator on this)
Include construction administration
Funded by bench adoptions
$5,000 - further refinement of concept design and collaboration with TTC
and City of Austin departments
$9,000 collaboration with the fabrication contractor on development of
fabrication drawings/details; construction oversight with TTC and the City of
Austin

Timeline:
Longhorn Dam Bridge
Construction expected to start by early 2024 for a duration of
2 years; completion in 2026
Benches installed in 2026

Dates:
RFQ Released
Aug 3rd

Info Meeting
Aug 17th

RFQ Due
Aug 31st

Review & Interviews
Sept 11th - 22nd

Short List Notifications
Sept 26th

Design Concept Due
Oct 24th

Review & Interviews
Oct 30th - Nov 9th

Final Section
Nov 13th - 17th

To Apply Online:
Are you an artist, designer and/or creative? Do you live in Austin, or elsewhere in Travis County, or have lived experience in Austin? Are you 18 years of age or older? If you can answer yes to all of these questions, then you are eligible to apply!

Please submit an artist statement of 500 words or less that addresses the following:

Have you designed and/or fabricated furniture previously? (This is not required)
If you have not designed or fabricated furniture previously, have you designed other works? If so, please describe the work, your process, any challenges you faced and what you learned. Please include imagery (as listed below).

Have you worked in the public realm before? (This is not required)

Introduce yourself: What does the selection panel need to know about you to better understand you and your work?

What excites you most about this project?
What skills, experience, and/or perspectives would you bring to this project?
Describe any connection you have to the Butler Trail or the Lake.

The artist statement and work samples will be evaluated for alignment with a public installed project and the project goals.

Please note that we are not asking you to propose ideas for your project at this time.

Samples of your work:
Please submit between five and ten digital images/file of previous work (Labeled with a number & your name)

References:
Please submit names and emails for two people who can speak to your creative abilities, collaborative style, capabilities and potential for success in a project like this.

Contact Info:
info@thetrailconservancy.org
Executive Project Director

To Apply Online: https://bit.ly/rfqbenches