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City targets both SITES and LEED certification for Pharr Tennis Center renovation

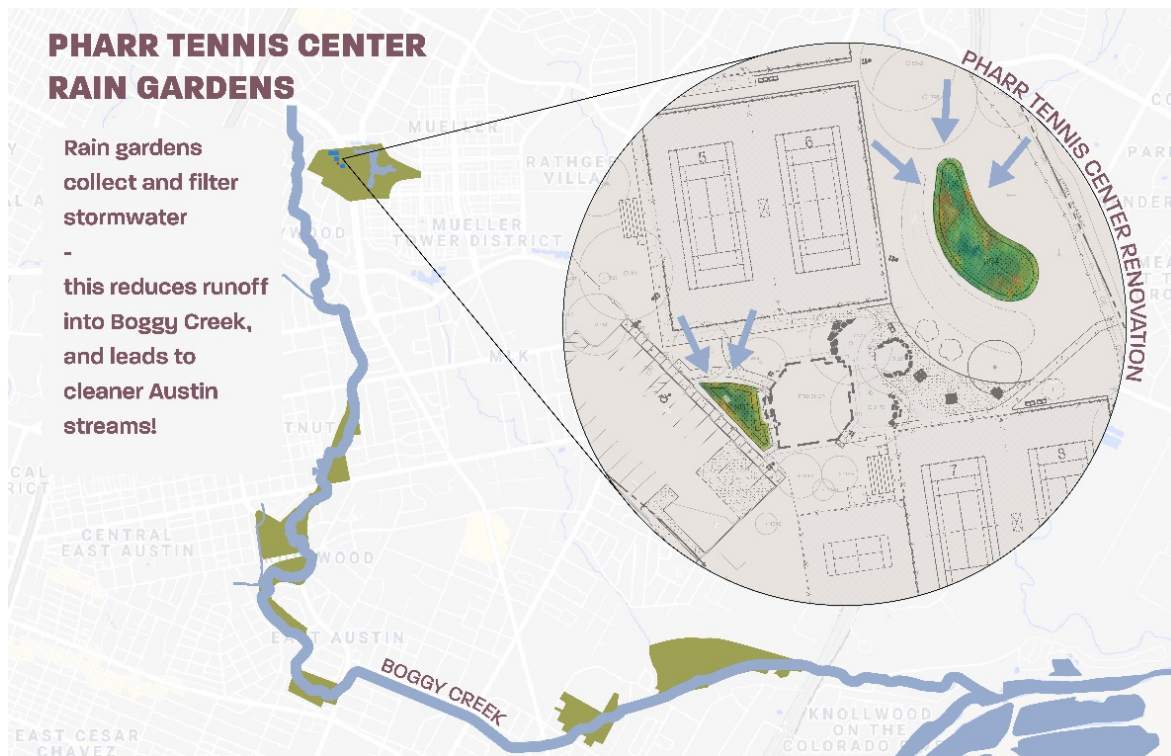
AUSTIN, TEXAS — The renovation of the City of Austin's Pharr Tennis Center is set to become the City's first project to earn certification under both the SITES and LEED green building rating systems. Located in a rapidly growing corner of East Austin and with a modest budget of \$2.7 million, the project is an example of how the City's commitment to resource efficiency, environmental stewardship, and community enhancement extends to projects at every scale. The Pharr Tennis Center is seeking SITES Silver level certification as well as LEED Gold.

Since 1975, the Pharr Tennis Center has served the surrounding community through both public park space and tennis facilities. Led by local firm Kirksey Architecture, the renovation includes the replacement of eight asphalt courts, improved site accessibility, and the introduction of multiple storm water management features that also serve as site amenities. These features include a rain garden designed by local landscape architecture firm Studio Balcones that will address drainage issues on the site. Additional sustainable strategies include improving soil health, installing native and adapted landscaping, protecting heritage trees, providing spaces that support health and wellness, and using sustainable materials and construction processes. For example, salvaged concrete slabs that previously covered the heritage tree root systems are being reused as aesthetic tree protection. On-site signage will help educate visitors on the project's additional sustainable features.

The culmination of years of research by leading professionals in the fields of soil, water, vegetation, materials, and human health, the SITES program was originally created in Austin through a collaboration between the American Society of Landscape Architects, The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at The University of Texas at Austin, and the United States Botanic Garden. SITES rewards practices that protect ecosystems and enhance the services they provide our communities, such as climate regulation, carbon storage, habitat creation, and flood mitigation. Eight of the world's 64 SITES certified projects are located in Texas, with the Pharr Tennis Center set to be the fourth SITES certified project in Austin.

LEED is the most widespread green building rating system in the world, establishing high levels of performance in areas such as energy, water, materials, and both the interior and exterior environment. Having been adopted as the minimum standard of sustainability for new construction projects in the City of Austin as well as other municipalities, LEED certified buildings are documented to have lower carbon emissions, create less waste, consume fewer resources, maintain better indoor air quality, and provide social and economic benefits to surrounding communities. The project's extensive connections to community bike trails, mass transit, and nearby businesses are heavily rewarded in the LEED rating system due to the emissions reductions associated with walkable communities and alternative transportation options.

The project is funded by the 2018 G.O. Bond, which allocated \$4 million to the Pharr Tennis Center renovation. Design concepts were informed by a community meeting that took place during June 2020. Construction is scheduled to begin in Summer/Fall 2021, with an anticipated eight-month construction schedule.



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Kirksey is a sustainable architecture and interior design firm with more than 38 million sf of LEED projects in their portfolio. With offices in Houston and Austin, Texas, Kirksey is team-based in structure and serves Commercial, Collegiate, Community, pK-12, Government, Healthcare, Hospitality, Science & Technology, and Multi-Family Residential markets. To learn more about the firm, visit www.kirksey.com.