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City moves forward on park projects

Design work for Garey and San Gabriel parks underway



By **Caitlin Perrone** | Posted May 11, 2016 at 5:20 am



The city of Georgetown is moving forward with several planned park improvements this spring, including construction of Garey Park and work at San Gabriel Park.

The city will use \$10 million in 2008 voter-approved bond funds

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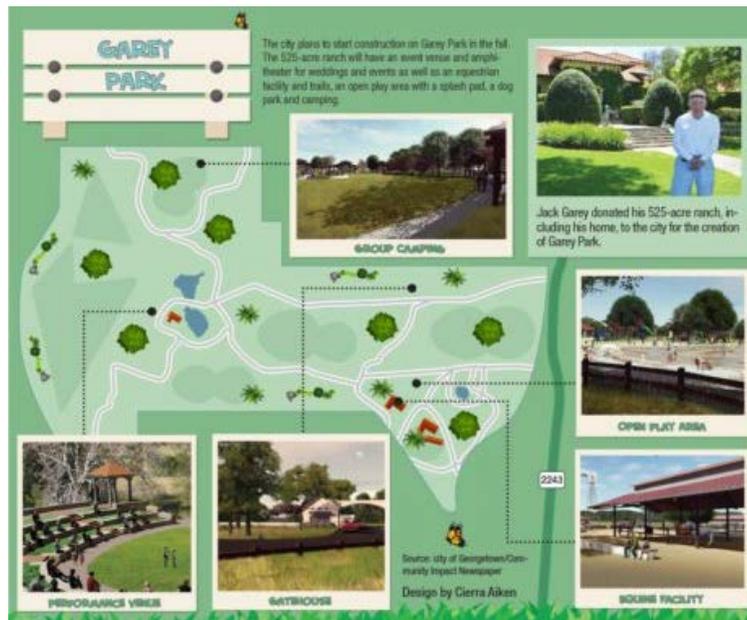
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to help fund the design and construction of Garey Park on FM 2243.

The 525-acre park, which was donated by Jack Garey, will be the city's largest park, said Kimberly Garrett, the Georgetown Parks and Recreation Department director.

The city is also in the design stage for improvements to San Gabriel Park. Other projects underway include updates to VFW Park and to the Williams Drive Pool.

Garrett said the city will also begin accepting ideas for upgrades at Founder's Park in May.



Garey Park

In 2004, Jack Garey announced he would donate his land to the city of Georgetown for a park. The 86-year-old and his late wife, Cammy, also pledged \$5 million to help fund the park's construction.

Garey had intended to bequeath the estate and the land to the city after his death. However, after he saw the design for the park in 2014, Garey decided he wanted to see the park created before he died.

"If I'm gone, I'll never get the benefit of seeing how it looks, so I thought it would be better to see it," he said. "It will be a pleasure to see people coming out and using the park."

Construction on the park is scheduled to start in September and be completed in late 2017 or early 2018.

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The Gareys' 6,000-square foot house will be used as an event venue. A 400-seat performance venue and surrounding green space that will accommodate 1,500 to 2,000 people will be in the event area.

The design was influenced by Garey's interest in horses, Garrett said. Garey has owned racehorses throughout the years, and Garrett said his trophies, banners and pictures will be displayed in the house.

Which parks project are you most looking forward to seeing completed?

San Gabriel Park improvements

Garey Park

VFW Park improvements

Founders Park upgrades

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"We want people to know who the Gareys were, so if you ever get to the house for a special event, you'll have a way to connect with the Gareys," she said.

The park will have an equestrian facility and horse trails, where the city will be able to offer guided trail rides, horse riding lessons, hunter and jumper shows, and classes, she said. The plan also includes a playground with a splash pad, a dog park with separate areas for large and small dogs, and a third area for obedience training or agility classes.

The plan also includes group camping in bunkhouses, which will sleep eight to 10 people; retreat camping in two-bedroom cabins that can fit up to four people; and primitive camping.

Garrett said the city plans to charge an entrance fee to help fund the operations and maintenance of the park.