

# Park Districts

Part I: An Overview

A PRESENTATION TO THE CITY OF AUSTIN  
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD'S  
FINANCE COMMITTEE

R.DEPALMA

11.17.2021



# **What is the Purpose of this Presentation?**

**Park funding is a challenge nationally but some entities, regardless of size, have figured out other ways to increase funding to meet the recreational needs of their community.**

**This presentation is going to explore one way in which park systems are organized and funded and that is the park district. This presentation does not mean that the Parks Board or the City of Austin is moving down this direction. This is just a first step on a long trail. The Parks Board has and will continue to explore other funding as well. If the Parks Board takes another step, it will just be a step towards a long path that may or may not lead us to a parks district.**

**Recently, I heard someone said that it was much easier to tear down a house rather than grab a hammer and build one. It is my hope that as we discuss new ideas, people bring their questions and their knowledge to help build whatever house our community decides on.**

**Thank you for understanding,**

**Rich DePalma**

**Vice Chair**

**City of Austin Parks and Recreation Board**

# What is a Park District?

**A Park District is a form of local special-purpose district / political subdivision created for the purpose of providing public parks and recreation in a geographic area.**

**An important criteria for a parks district is that it has the governing body has the ability levy voter-approved property taxes on behalf of the district.**

**Park districts allow greater visibility to tax payers on where the money is being spent since property tax funding goes directly into the parks budget and not part of the City's General Revenue Fund.**

**Other type of special districts include: Central Health, Austin Transit Partnership**





# Challenge Statement

What issue are we trying to solve?



# The Frustration

Not Enough Money to Meet Austin's Park and Recreation Needs

*“Why buy new property when it takes so long to develop?”*

*“When is my park going to be improved?”*

*“Why isn't there a park ranger to address ....?”*

*“When will there be funding for...?”*

*“Why don't we provide summer camps for more youth?”*

*“We don't have a park in our area.”*

We are a growing city and the issue is not that we are acquiring parkland or choosing not to fix and improve what is needed. The issue is that there is not enough funding to meet the infrastructure and programming needs of our growing community. The data supports that claim and every year we fall further behind.



# City of Austin FY2022 Budget

## Parks and Recreation Performance Measures

### INDICATOR C: Accessibility to Quality Parks, Trails, and Recreational Opportunities



This is one of City Council's top-ten indicator categories. Five strategic measures are used to signal performance related to access to quality parks, trails, and recreational opportunities. Of these, three measures are on track, one is near target, and one is being measured without a set target. In this indicator category, Austin's ParkScore stands out because it has an on-track status and is trending positive in comparison to other indicator measures.

*Hmmm...*

35% not having park access is not success

ParkScore dropped to 45 not 35

65% satisfied with parks is not success

A long way to go with ADA

ID	Measure	Target	Latest Achieved	Status	Trend
HE.C.1	<a href="#">Percentage of residents who have access to parks and open spaces</a>	65%	64%	Near Target	
HE.C.2	<a href="#">Austin's ParkScore Ranking</a>	35	37	On Track	
HE.C.3	<a href="#">Percentage of residents satisfied with Parks and Recreation programs and facilities</a>	65%	66%	On Track	
HE.C.4	<a href="#">Percentage of Parks and Recreation programs and services that are ADA accessible</a>	35%	41%	On Track	Not Available
HE.C.5	<a href="#">Number and Percentage of Linear Miles of Newly Constructed Sidewalks and Urban Trails that Lie within Census Tracts with Low Levels of Leisure-time Physical Activity Among Adults Aged 18 Years or Older*</a>	Not Available	45%	Measuring	Not Available

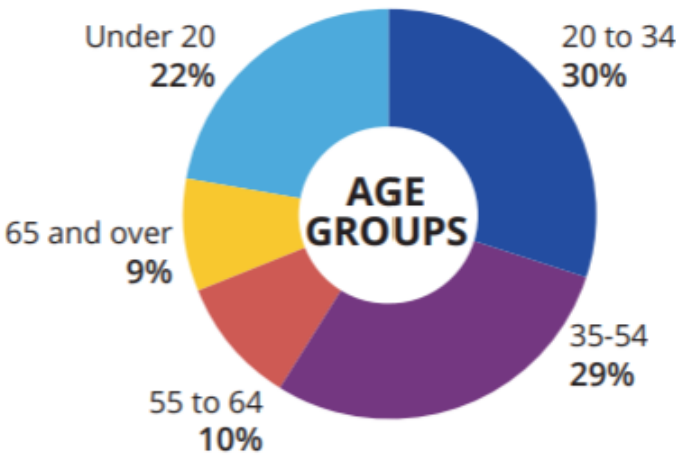
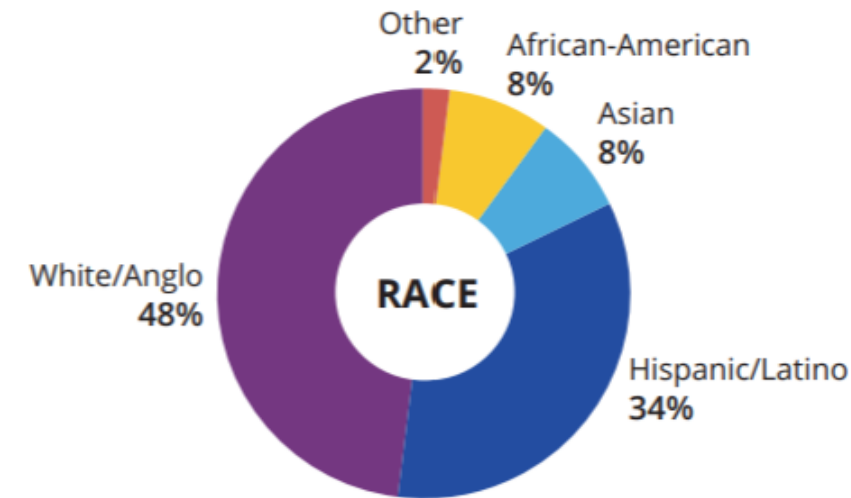
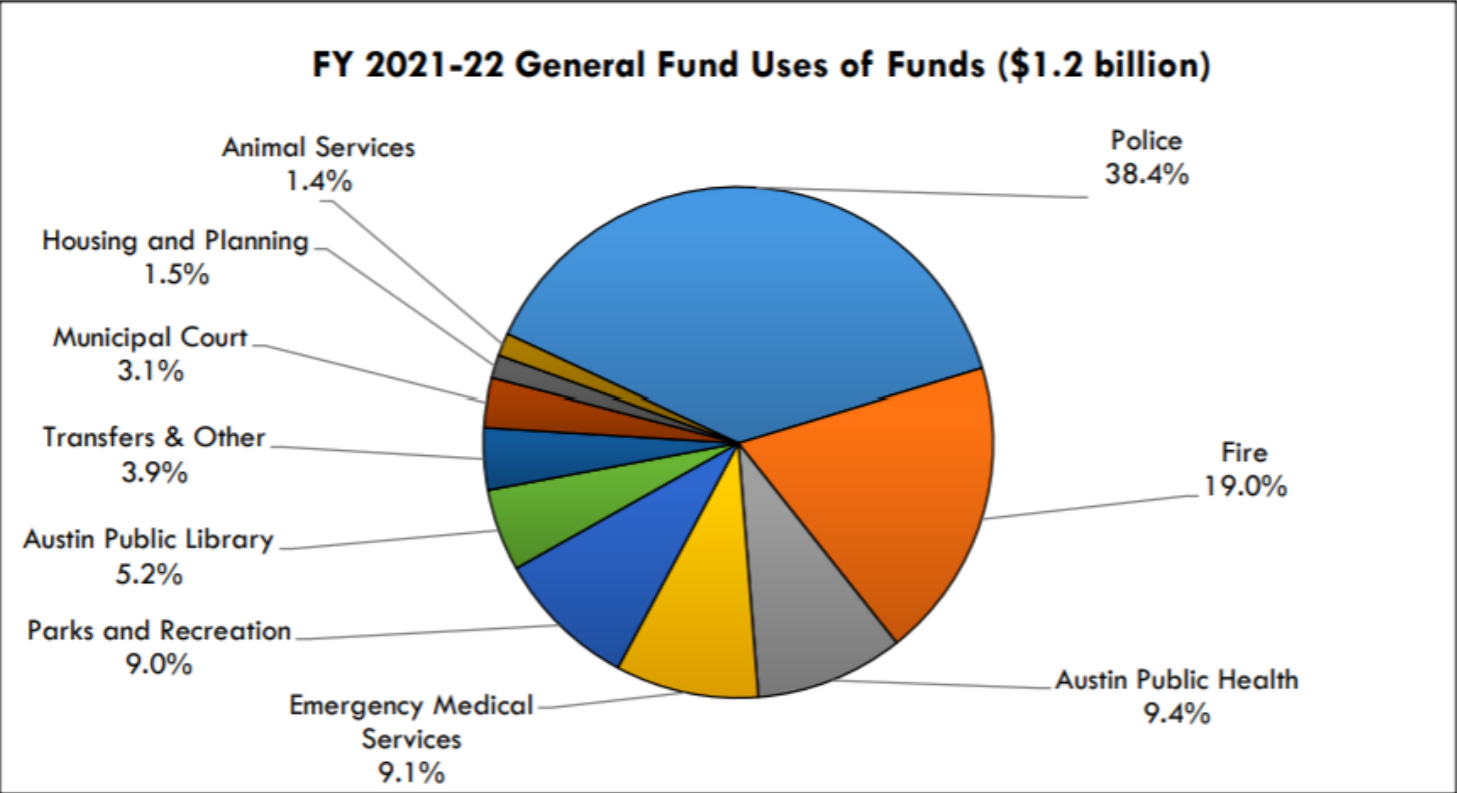
\* The data listed reflects the percentage only

# Our Park Infrastructure Issue

We need to fix it and grow.

- Austin has doubled in size since 1995 but we now have five less pools than in 1995.
- Continued investment of parks and park improvements is needed along the I-35 corridor to address physical and mental health disparities, child development, and senior health.
- Austin did not keep up with population growth and is severely behind in adding community/rec/senior centers, new playgrounds, and active recreation.
- Austinites travel to surrounding communities every weekend to use fields in Leander, Manor and other cities.
- Austin loses tourism and park infrastructure investment from not having regional and national tournament level facilities. Examples – swimming, rowing, softball, soccer, ultimate frisbee, tennis, pickle ball, etc...
- We don't help our children live up to their potential by not having facilities to meet their interests. When was the last time an Austinite participated in the Olympics?
- State-mandated voter approval tax rate calculation from 8% to 3.5% took effect in fiscal year 2020-21.

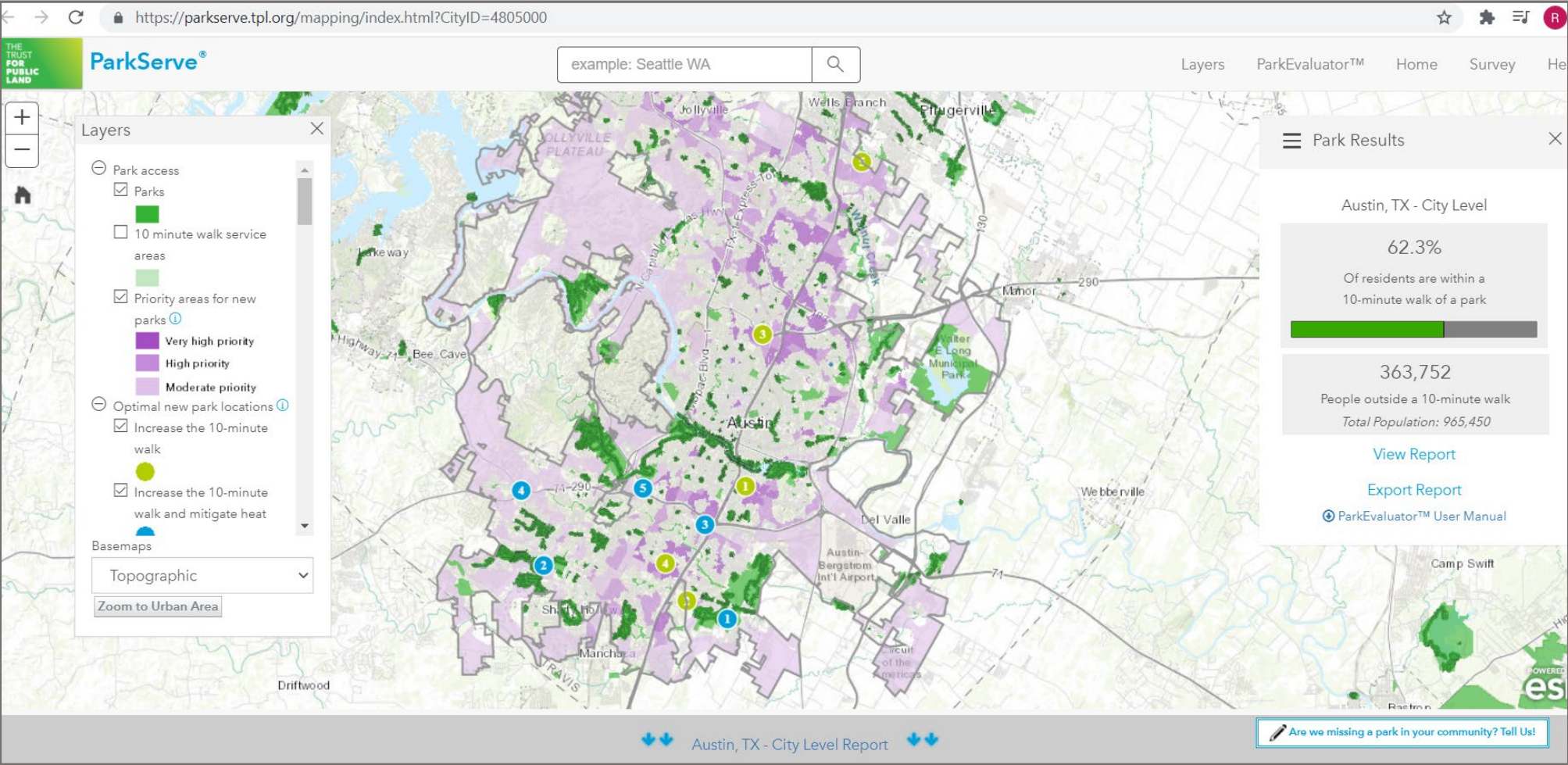
# City of Austin FY2022 General Fund Budget Allocation & Population Served



Source: [City of Austin 2022 Proposed Budget](#)

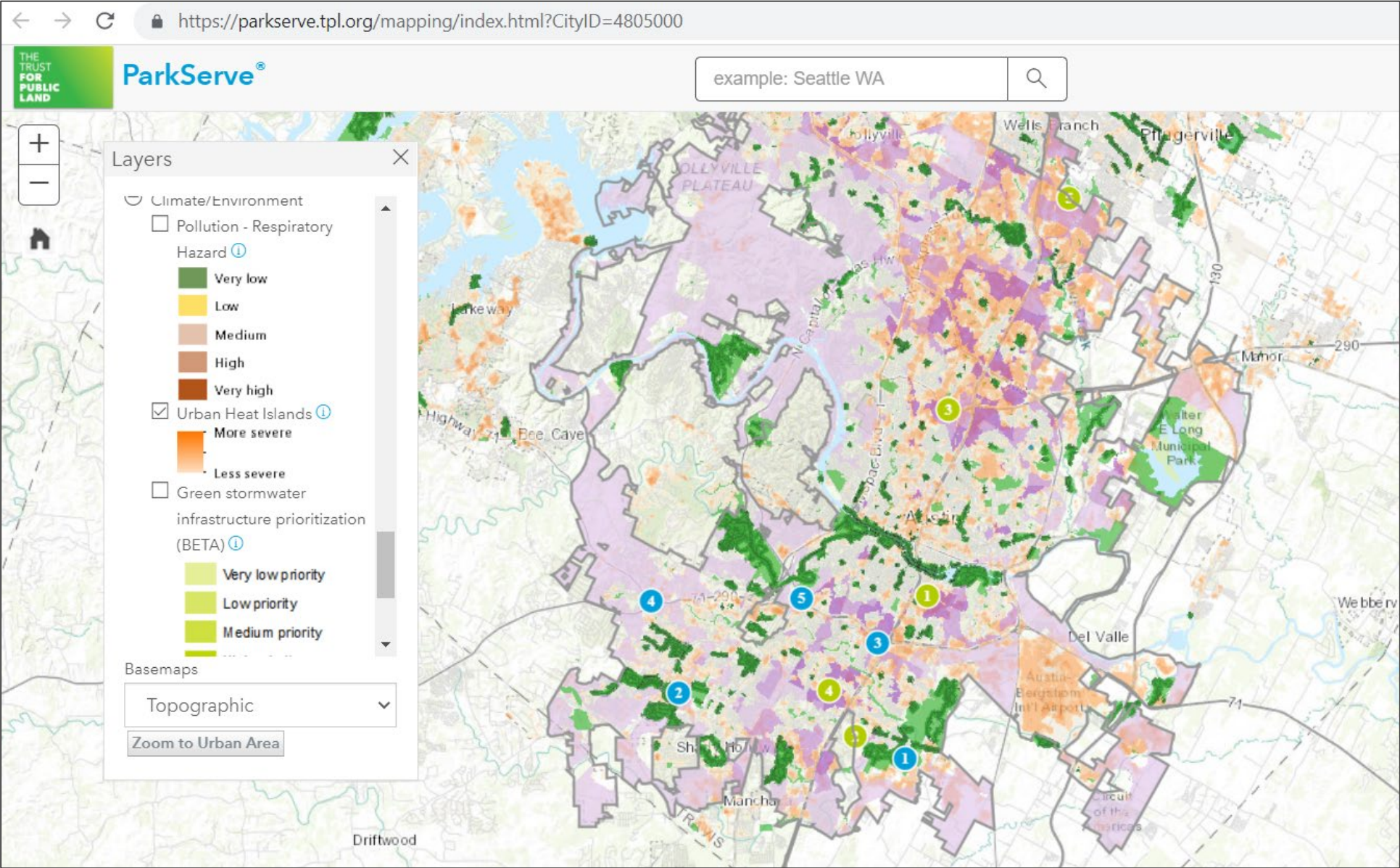


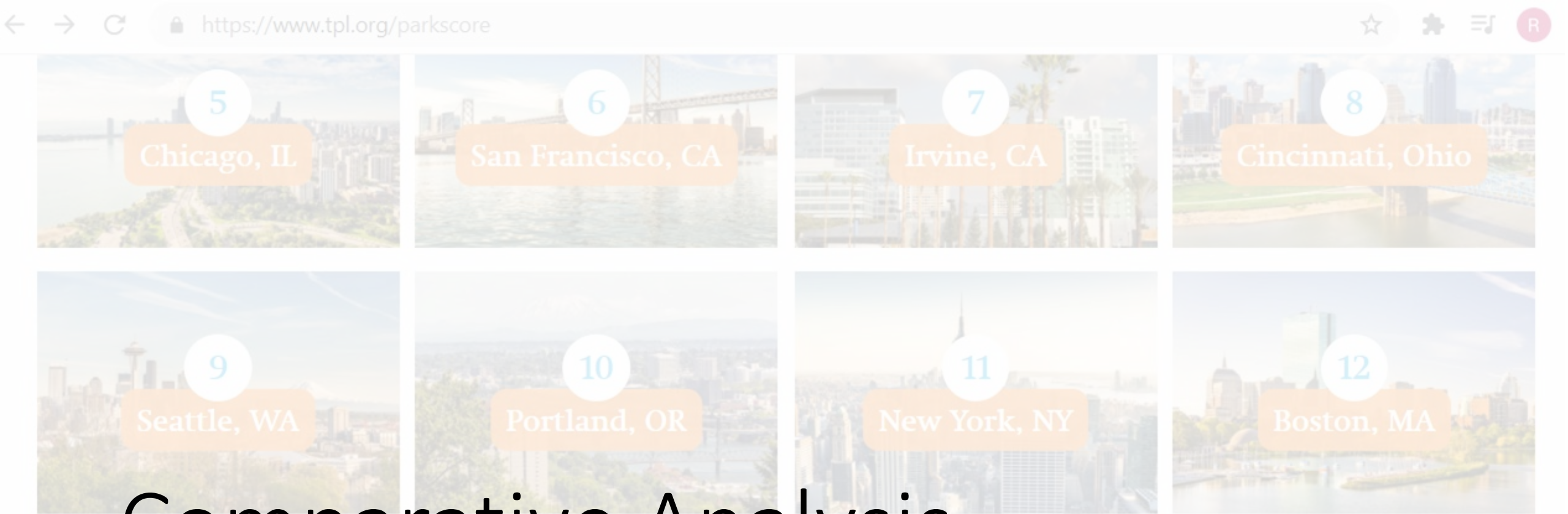
# Investment in Parkland Access Must be a Priority





# Funding Needed to Reduce Urban Heat Islands In Priority Areas





# Comparative Analysis

How does our community compare to top park systems?

EXPLORE ALL 100 PARKSCORE CITIES

42 Newark, NJ

43 Anchorage, AK

F 44 Oakland, CA

45 Austin, TX

# Comparing Park Systems

## Select Cities of Different Sizes and Regions

	Austin	Arlington, VA	Portland	New York City	Madison, WI	Plano	Henderson, NV	Boise, ID	Boulder
TPL ParkScore (100 largest cities)	45/100	4/100	10/100	11/100	13/100	15/100	22/100	29/100	
Type of Park System	City	City	City	City	City	City	City	City	City
Year of Data	Department	Department	Department	Department	Department	Department	Department	Department	Department
City Population	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
	985,370	232,588	656,300	8,502,614	264,742	306,426	314,232	239,077	105,673
Total Annual Park Spending									
Total Operations	\$147,285,516	\$96,036,620	\$146,549,379	\$1,593,924,391	\$48,761,452	\$70,840,102	\$48,071,946	\$41,565,969	\$56,781,005
Capital and Land Acquisition	\$99,079,722	\$41,707,663	\$117,616,664	\$1,196,771,560	\$23,187,216	\$34,780,729	\$39,720,895	\$30,615,416	\$39,872,949
Total Park Spend per Resident	\$48,205,794	\$54,328,957	\$28,932,715	397155831	\$25,574,236	\$36,059,373	\$8,351,051	\$10,950,553	\$17,908,056
Park Operations Spend per	<b>\$149.47</b>	<b>\$412.90</b>	<b>\$223.30</b>	<b>\$187.46</b>	<b>\$184.18</b>	<b>\$231.18</b>	<b>\$152.98</b>	<b>\$173.86</b>	<b>\$537.33</b>
Capital and Land Acquisition	\$100.55	\$179.32	\$179.21	\$140.75	\$87.58	\$113.50	\$126.41	\$128.06	\$377.32
Spend per Resident									
	\$48.92	\$233.58	\$44.08	\$46.71	\$96.60	\$117.68	\$26.58	\$45.80	\$169.47

Source: [Trust for Public Lands 2021 City Park Facts Data Tables](#)

Note: Boulder information was compiled from the City of Boulder Budget since it is not one of the largest 100 cities.



# Comparing Park Systems

## Austin Compared to Select Park Districts

	Austin	Baton Rouge	Minneapolis	Seattle Metro Park District	Chicago Parks District	Northbrook Parks District	Glenview Parks District	Schaumburg Park District	Waukegan Parks District	Skokie Parks District	Peoria Parks District	Fargo Park District
TPL ParkScore (100 largest cities)	45/100		3/100	9/100	5/100							
Type of Park System	City Department	Park District	Park District	Park District	Park District	Park District	Park District	Park District	Park District	Park District	Park District	Park District
Year of Data	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2020	2020
City Population	985,370	235,833	424,175	740,227	2,740,225	33,170	55,976	74,227	88,182	64,270	113,532	125,990
Total Annual Park Spending	\$147,285,516	\$36,031,554	\$125,973,935	\$217,042,019	\$507,521,467	\$24,117,927	\$20,667,194	\$46,096,165	\$22,882,847	\$26,513,752	\$42,671,456	\$20,169,134
Total Operations	\$99,079,722	\$27,248,152	\$99,702,879	\$150,625,519	\$406,628,844							
Capital and Land Acquisition	\$48,205,794	\$8,783,402	\$26,271,056	\$66,416,500	\$100,892,623							
Total Park Spend per Resident	<b>\$149.47</b>	<b>\$152.78</b>	<b>\$296.99</b>	<b>\$293.21</b>	<b>\$185.21</b>	<b>\$727.10</b>	<b>\$369.22</b>	<b>\$621.02</b>	<b>\$259.50</b>	<b>\$412.54</b>	<b>\$375.85</b>	<b>\$160.09</b>
Park Operations Spend per Resident	\$100.55	\$115.54	\$235.05	\$203.49	\$148.39							
Capital and Land Acquisition Spend per Resident	\$48.92	\$37.24	\$61.93	\$89.72	\$36.82							

Source: [Trust for Public Lands 2021 City Park Facts Data Tables](#)

Note: Illinois park districts (with exception of Chicago) and Fargo were compiled through budgets and other summaries.

# A Deeper Look

Four different park district systems – Chicago, Minneapolis, Seattle, and Onion Creek Metropolitan Park District

# A Brief Overview

	Chicago Parks District	Minneapolis Parks Board	Onion Creek Metro	Seattle
Taxing Authority	Yes	Yes but rate is coordinated.	Yes	Yes
Governance	Commissioners Appointed by Mayor	Commissioners Elected	Commissioners Elected	City Council serves as Parks Board
Budget Coordination	No	Budget is based on coordinated tax rate.	Improvements are agreed upon with the city.	Yes since City Council services as Parks Board
Asset Ownership	TBD	TBD	City of Austin	City of Seattle

# Chicago Park District

Chicago, IL



- Chicago Park District Structure and Funding Overview In 1869, the Illinois State Legislature established three independent park commissions around Chicago.
- 1934, the Park Consolidation Act consolidated the 22 park districts and created the Chicago Park District (CPD), an independent government agency.
- The [Chicago Park District Act](#) provides that the Chicago Park District (the “Park District”) shall be governed by a board of seven (7) non-salaried Commissioners who are appointed by the Mayor of the City of Chicago with the approval of the Chicago City Council.
- Under the [Chicago Park District Code](#), the Commissioners have a fiduciary duty to act, vote on all matters, and govern the Park District in the best interest of the Park District.
- The management and control of business and property of the Park District shall be vested in the Board of Commissioners.



# Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

*Minneapolis, Minnesota*

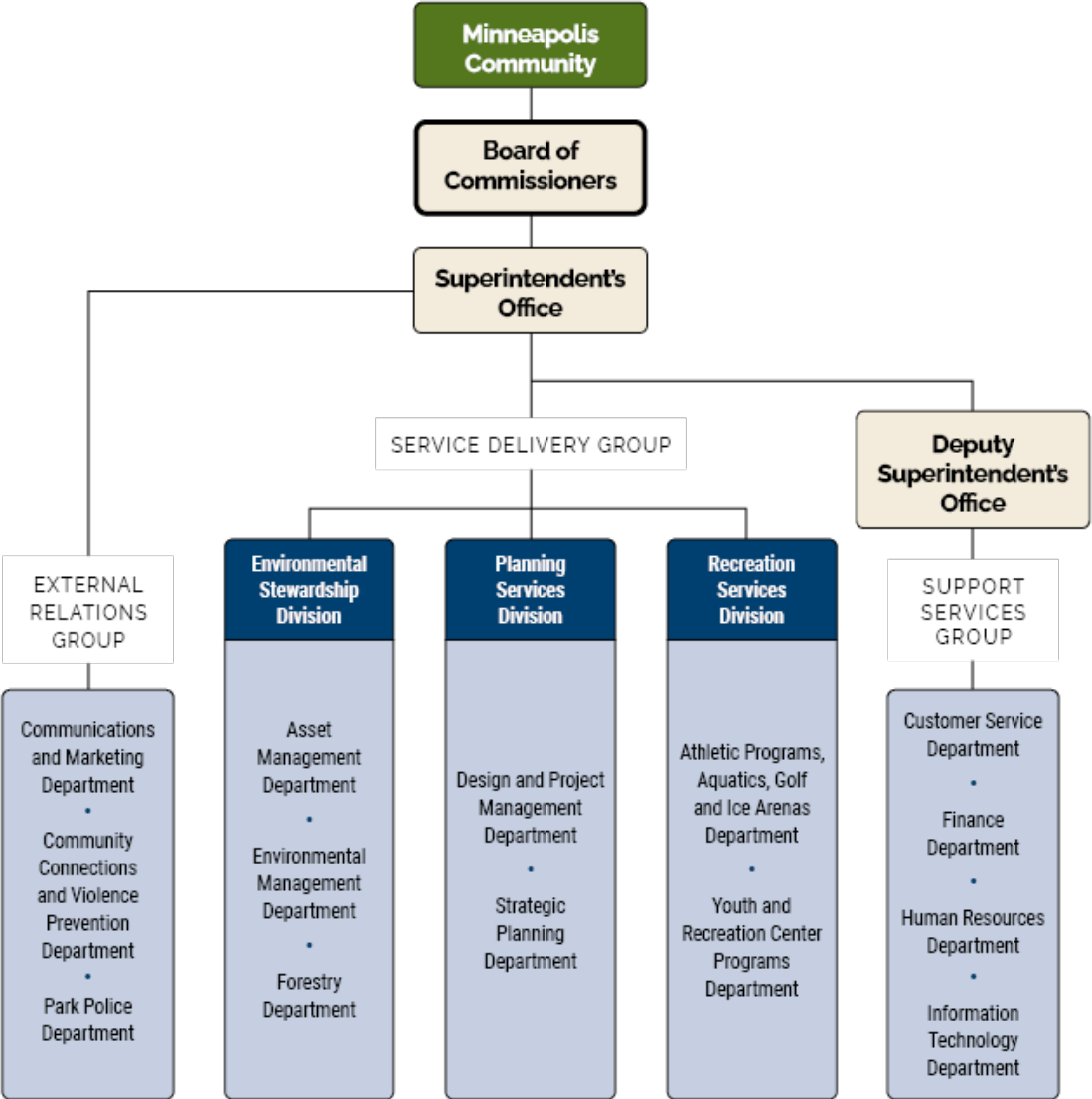
In 1883, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board was created by an act of the Minnesota State Legislature and a vote of Minneapolis residents.

MPRB was recognized by the Trust for Public Land in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 as the #1 urban park system in the United States.

It serves as an independently elected, semi-autonomous body responsible for governing, maintaining, and developing the Minneapolis Park System.

City of Minneapolis voters elect nine commissioners every four years: one from each of the six park districts, and three that serve at-large.

The City of Minneapolis has an integrated budget process that includes the MPRB, Board of Estimate and Taxation and City of Minneapolis.



# Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

*Minneapolis, Minnesota*

In 1919 an act of the State Legislature created the Board of Estimate Taxation in the City of Minneapolis

- Membership - the Board consists of six members:
  - Mayor or designate
  - City Council President
  - Chairperson of the Ways and Means/Budget Committee
  - Park and Recreation Board Commissioner
  - Two members elected city-wide for four-year terms

2019 Mayor's Recommended Property Tax Levies				
Fund	2018	2019	% Change From 2018	\$ Change From 2018
General Fund	189,452,884	201,345,000	6.28%	11,892,116
Minneapolis Park Board	62,201,719	65,640,000	5.53%	3,438,281
Bond Redemption	39,350,000	41,510,000	5.49%	2,160,000
Pensions	22,310,000	23,310,000	4.48%	1,000,000
Municipal Building Commission	5,102,929	5,256,000	3.00%	153,071
Board of Estimate and Taxation	190,000	210,000	10.53%	20,000
Teacher's Retirement Association	2,300,000	2,300,000	0.00%	0
Library / Downtown Office Debt Service	10,300,000	10,300,000	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>331,207,532</b>	<b>349,871,000</b>	<b>5.63%</b>	<b>18,663,468</b>

# Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

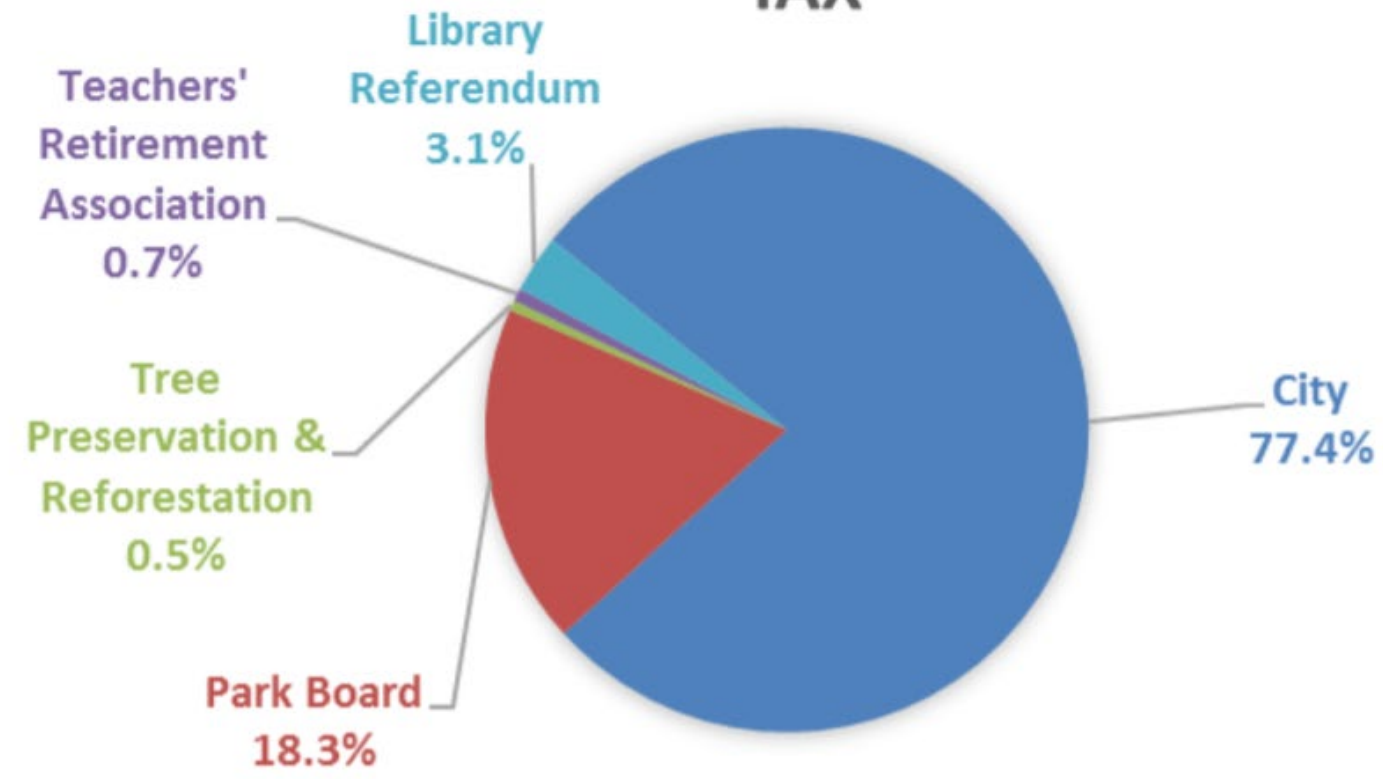
## 2019 Budget Calendar

May 9	Committee of the Whole MPRB Budget Retreat – Day 1	September 12	Board of Estimate and Taxation public hearing regarding 2019 maximum property tax levies, 5:05 pm, Council Chambers, Room 317  MPRB 2019 budget overview presentation to Board of Estimate and Taxation
May 23	Committee of the Whole MPRB Budget Retreat – Day 2	September 26	Board of Estimate and Taxation sets 2019 maximum property tax levies 4:00 pm, Council Chambers, Room 317
May 24, 30	Employee Budget Sessions	October 17	Full Board Presentation of Superintendent's 2019 Recommended Budget including Capital Improvement Program
June 12	Committee of the Whole MPRB Budget Retreat – Day 3	October 22	Park Board presentation to City Ways & Means Committee, 11:15 am, Council Chambers, Room 317
May-June	Internal Service Funds budget development Departments work in coordination with Park Board Finance department to prepare department rate models, operating and capital budgets.	November 7	Administration and Finance Committee  Public comment on Superintendent's 2019 Recommended Budget  Commissioner review/input on Superintendent's 2019 Recommended Budget
June 18 4:00 – 4:30pm	MPRB 2019 budget overview presentation to Mayor	November 14	Committee of the Whole  Public comment on Superintendent's 2019 Recommended Budget  Commissioner review/input on Superintendent's 2019 Recommended Budget
July-September	Operating budget development Departments work in coordination with Park Board Finance department to prepare department operating budgets.	November 28	Public comment on Superintendent's 2019 Recommended Budget  Administration and Finance Committee Approval of the 2019 Budget
August 1	Committee of the Whole Capital Plan Review	November 28	City of Minneapolis public hearing on Tax Levy and 2019 Budget, 6:05 pm, Council Chambers, Room 317
August 15	Mayor's 2019 Recommended Budget Released by this Date	December 5	Public Hearing on Tax Levy and 2019 Budget, 6:05 pm, Council Chambers, Room 317  Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board approval of the 2019 tax levy and 2019 Budget, City Hall Room 333
August 15	Administration and Finance Committee Resolution requesting Board of Estimate and Taxation to set the maximum certified tax levy for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board		
September 5	Full Board Resolution requesting Board of Estimate and Taxation to set the maximum certified tax levy for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board  Administration and Finance Committee Impact of Mayor's Recommended Budget on MPRB 2019 Budget		

# Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

*Minneapolis, Minnesota*

## 2018 CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS PROPERTY TAX





# Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

## Park Funding Facts

Comparison by Geographical Area and Commissioner District

	NE/SE District 1	N District 2	Upper S District 3	Upper SW District 4	Lower S District 5	Lower SW District 6
Population per American Community Survey, 2013–2017	73,661	70,506	69,617	66,863	65,141	64,536
Average annual capital investment per capita – 2013–2018/Slated for 2019–2024	\$46/32	\$29/66	\$43/28	\$19/43	\$23/29	\$12/14
Youth and Family Recreation investment per capita, 2018	\$34	\$38	\$45	\$17	\$32	\$37
Maintenance and Operations investments per capita, 2018	\$62	\$68	\$44	\$58	\$73	\$72
Parks	41	39	20	37	22	24
Total Acres – Land/Water	795/22	1,056/141	316/57	728/576	1,076/401	632/568
Land acquisition 2013–2018	5.6 acres	7.2 acres	.15 acres	4.2 acres	0 acres	0 acres
Recreation Centers <sup>(1)</sup>	8	6	11	4	9	11
Play Areas <sup>(1)</sup>	22	28	18	17	18	15
Wading Pools <sup>(1)</sup>	13	13	11	6	10	9
Basketball and Tennis courts	46	33	31	26	40	44

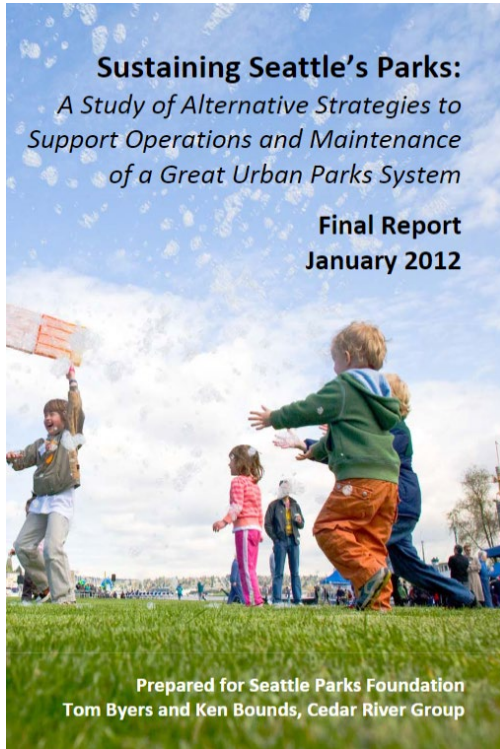
	Numbers below in millions					
Neighborhood Parks – funds allocated for capital improvements, 2013–2018 <sup>(2)</sup>	\$6.5 M	\$2.5 M	\$9.7 M	\$2.2 M	\$5.2 M	\$2.2 M
Regional Parks – funds allocated for capital improvements, 2013–2018	\$13.7 M	\$9.7 M	\$8.1 M	\$5.5 M	\$4 M	\$2.5 M
Neighborhood Parks – funds slated for capital improvements, 2019–2024 <sup>(2)</sup>	\$6.7 M	\$15.6 M	\$8.8 M	\$10.9 M	\$4.2 M	\$4.1 M
Regional Parks – funds slated for capital improvements, 2019–2024	\$7.4 M	\$12.4 M	\$2.9 M	\$6.5 M	\$7.2 M	\$1.5 M
Maintenance and Operations – funds invested 2018	\$4.4 M	\$4.8 M	\$3.1 M	\$3.9 M	\$4.7 M	\$4.7 M
Key Youth and Family Recreation Services – funds invested in 2018	\$2.5 M	\$2.7 M	\$3.2 M	\$1.1 M	\$2.1 M	\$2.4 M

<sup>1</sup> Examples of park assets available city-wide.  
<sup>2</sup> Does not include approximately \$3.7 million per year for neighborhood park rehabilitation, beginning in 2017.

Created October 2019  
 Numbers reflect current records and may change

# Seattle Metropolitan Park District

Seattle, Washington



Project Sponsors: Seattle Parks Foundation (Lead Sponsor), Arboretum Foundation, Association of Recreation Councils, Forterra, Museum of History and Industry, Seattle Aquarium Society, Seward Park Environmental & Audubon Center, and Woodland Park Zoological Society.

## How it Started (From the Report)

“The parks system is Seattle’s common ground...

These assets, when well cared-for and operating at full capacity, return value in more ways than we generally acknowledge: Our parks help to clean the air we breathe and the water we drink. They give us space to exercise our bodies and the tools to maintain our health. They bring us closer to our neighbors, and help us break through barriers of language, class, religion and culture. They strengthen our neighborhoods, add value to our property, and generate tax revenue for our city government. They create an overall quality of life that makes our city a desirable place to live and raise our families.

But when these assets are not well cared for, the public benefits they generate can quickly be diminished and can become liabilities. That is the challenge we are facing today. For however much the people of Seattle love their parks, the fact is that the Seattle Parks and Recreation system lacks a consistent, sustainable source of funds to pay for operations, maintenance, rehabilitation and repair. In the absence of such a funding mechanism, the City government is unable to meet public expectations of the parks system and has been forced to postpone preventive maintenance, creating a growing backlog of necessary repairs.

That is the challenge we are facing today. For however much the people of Seattle love their parks, the fact is that the Seattle Parks and Recreation system lacks a consistent, sustainable source of funds to pay for operations, maintenance, rehabilitation and repair. In the absence of such a funding mechanism, the City government is unable to meet public expectations of the parks system and has been forced to postpone preventive maintenance, creating a growing backlog of necessary repairs.”

# Seattle Metropolitan Park District

## 2012 Report Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** We ask the City to use existing authority in state law to create a “Seattle Metropolitan Park District”<sup>1</sup> to provide a new source of dedicated funding for the park system.

We recommend forming a park district rather relying on special tax levies because:

- The needs of the parks system are urgent; competition for levy funds is great.
- A park district will provide new revenue dedicated solely to parks and recreation that cannot be diverted to other purposes.
- A park district can be easily integrated into the existing park system with little or no additional costs.
- The creation of a park district will reduce the strain on future City budgets.

**Recommendation 2:** The level of funding requested from the voters for the Seattle Metropolitan Park District should be sufficient to put the park system on a truly sustainable path and provide enough resources to meet the future needs of a vibrant and growing city. To that end, we recommend that:

**Recommendation 3:** The new park district must be designed to be highly efficient and accountable to the community it serves. To that end, we recommend:

**Recommendation 4:** The City should invest a portion of the new resources obtained through the creation of the park district to ensure that the parks system is a model of resource conservation and innovation.

**Recommendation 5:** Continue to extend the tradition of civic partnerships that has become a hallmark of the Seattle Parks System and create new partnership opportunities that enhance the system.

# Seattle Metropolitan Park District

Seattle, Washington



On August 5, 2014 voters in the City of Seattle approved Proposition 1 which created the Seattle Park District.

Property taxes collected by the Seattle Park District provides funding for City parks and recreation including maintaining parklands and facilities, operating community centers and recreation programs, and developing new neighborhood parks on previously acquired sites.

The Park District is governed by the Seattle City Council acting ex officio as the [District Board](#).

The [District Oversight Committee](#) is a community board that will provide advice to the Mayor, City Council, and Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, related to the Seattle Park District. The DOC's role and responsibilities are outlined by [ordinance #124468](#) which approved the [Interlocal Agreement](#)

As established in an [interlocal agreement](#) between the City and the District, Seattle Parks and Recreation will provide services on behalf of the Park District.





# Seattle Parks & Recreation

The MPD provides access to new property tax revenue streams that are not in competition with other City departments, enabling Parks to increase their funding by a minimum of approximately \$47 million per year.

A clause in city ordinance 124468, that established the MPD, requires that MPD funding cannot supplant general fund funding, specifying that the level of general fund funding for the MPD cannot fall below the 2014 budget level, plus CPI increases annually.

# Onion Creek Metro Park District

Austin, Texas

While the City purchased the land for the OCMP in the late 1990's, due to the lack of available resources much of the park was still undeveloped 15 years later. To help fund capital improvements and operations and maintenance costs, S.B. 1872 was created in 2013. This bill established a special taxing district that would ensure a steady stream of maintenance revenue to be used towards both parkland within the District and OCMP.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# An Austin Parks District?

## *Starting off with the Texas Constitution*

The Texas Constitution, Article 16. General Provisions.

Sec. 59. Conservation and Development of Natural Resources; Development of Parks and Recreational Facilities; Conservation and Reclamation Districts; Indebtedness and Taxation Authorized.

(c-1) In addition and only as provided by this subsection, the Legislature may authorize conservation and reclamation districts to develop and finance with taxes those types and categories of parks and recreational facilities that were not authorized by this section to be developed and financed with taxes before September 13, 2003. For development of such parks and recreational facilities, the Legislature may authorize indebtedness payable from taxes as may be necessary to provide for improvements and maintenance only for a conservation and reclamation district all or part of which is located in Bexar County, Bastrop County, Waller County, **Travis County, Williamson County,** Harris County, Galveston County, Brazoria County, Fort Bend County, or Montgomery County, or for the Tarrant Regional Water District, a water control and improvement district located in whole or in part in Tarrant County.

# Onion Creek Metro Park District (Municipal Management District)

*Austin, Texas*

- Momark Development begins process to create the municipal management district.
- March 28, 2013 – The City of Austin approves resolution [No. 20130328-016](#), consenting to the special legislation creating a municipal management district known as Onion Creek Metro Park. The resolution does not authorize the district to become operational, exercise powers, or hold elections at that time..
- April 4, 2013 – Senators Zaffirini and Watson (with Rep. Rodriguez as a sponsor) file [SB1872](#) to create the district.
- June 14, 2013 - SB 1872 signed by Governor Perry
- January – May 2014 – City staff [negotiate](#) consent agreement. Topics: standards, master planning, development, O&M
- The creation fo the District was authorized by Chapter 3924, Subtitle C, Title 4, Texas Special District Local Laws
- In accordance with Section 54.016 of the Texas Water Code, land within the corporate limits may not be included within a district without the City’s written consent.
- June 26, 2014 - City of Austin approves ordinance [No. 20140626-031](#). Authorizes the creation of the Onion Creek Metro Park District and the execution of the consent agreement. <http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=213765>



# Onion Creek Metro Park District (Municipal Management District)

*Austin, Texas*

- The Onion Creek Metro Park District was defined and authorized in by [Chapter 3924](#), Subtitle C, Title 4, Texas Special District Local Laws.
- The district was created under [Section 59](#), Article XVI of the Texas Constitution. Section 59 is entitled “Conservation and Development of Natural Resources; Development of Parks and Recreational Facilities, Conservation and Reclamation Districts; Indebtedness and Taxation Authorized.”
- The creation of the district is essential to accomplish the purposes of Sections [52](#) and [52-a](#), Article III, and Section [59](#), Article XVI, Texas Constitution, and other public purposes stated in this chapter. By creating the district and in authorizing the city, the county, and other political subdivisions to contract with the district, the legislature has established a program to accomplish the public purposes set out in Section [52-a](#), Article III, Texas Constitution.
- Applicability of Municipal Management Districts Law. Except as otherwise provided by this chapter, Chapter [375](#), Local Government Code, applies to the district. In accordance with Section 375.001 (b), Chapter 375 of the Local Government Code, “the creation of the district is necessary to promote, develop, encourage, and maintain employment, commerce, transportation, housing, tourism, recreation, the arts, entertainment, economic development, safety, and the public welfare in the district.”
- In accordance with [Section 54.016](#) of the Texas Water Code, land within the corporate limits may not be included within a district without the City’s written consent.

# Next Steps

A framework and options

# Pros and Cons and Other

## Pros

- Likely transformative
- Neighborhoods would elect their commissioner
- Reduce the levels of government
- Potentially increases funding
- Keeps concession revenue with parks
- Likely allow for areas to catch up on previously unfunded projects
- Increase the impact of parkland groups
- Likely increase in tax and expenditure transparency
- Park commissioners would be the policy maker

## Cons

- Another taxing district
- Effort will not be easy
- Park advocates could possibly not be elected

## Neutral

- Would still be operating under city codes.
- Still have a close relationship with the city.

## Unknown

- Is our system too big for a volunteer, elected commission?
- Would this negatively impact any park or greenbelt?

# Questions To Be Explored Over Time and With Community Input

1. Do we want to start a process to investigate further?
2. What information is still needed?
3. If we are interested in continuing the conversation, all our park partners must be brought on board.
4. How do we initiate the process? Board resolution asking for a council directive to the city manager's office for a study or is it forming a working group/task force?
5. Do we look towards the nonprofit community to initiate the study?
6. We need to make sure everyone feels comfortable with the goal of increasing funding for parks. This is not about taking other types of funding away from partners.
7. How do we ensure real equity at the decision-making process and on the implementation?
8. How can we ensure parks receiving TIFs are not impacted?
9. How can we ensure that H.O.T. will not be impacted?
10. Would the council be the board or would it be a separately elected board?
11. What would the commissioner districts look like? Mirror council districts?



# End

Questions? Email [bc-richard.depalma@austintexas.gov](mailto:bc-richard.depalma@austintexas.gov)

# PARKS AND RECREATION

Operating Budget	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Estimated	2020-21 Amended	2021-22 Proposed
<b>Expenditures by Strategic Outcome</b>					
Culture and Lifelong Learning	8,477,000	6,349,692	6,962,964	6,919,414	6,923,348
Government that Works	423,011	683,921	621,149	550,050	553,672
Health and Environment	66,197,069	75,320,524	82,715,673	85,302,239	86,045,884
Mobility	1,362,352	1,771,376	2,215,099	2,214,986	2,300,547
Safety	12,820,200	2,647,347	3,205,354	3,253,441	3,566,630
Transfers and Debt Service	10,424,720	10,869,472	9,917,742	11,487,468	13,101,456
<b>Total by Strategic Outcome</b>	<b>99,704,352</b>	<b>97,642,332</b>	<b>105,637,981</b>	<b>109,727,598</b>	<b>112,491,537</b>
<b>Expenditure by Program</b>					
Community Services	53,549,498	49,645,338	58,975,533	62,615,181	63,461,110
Park Planning, Development, and Operations	27,970,796	29,227,280	28,855,828	29,896,457	30,157,634
Support Services	7,336,494	7,900,241	7,888,878	5,728,492	5,771,337
Transfers, Debt Service, and Other Requirements	10,847,564	10,869,472	9,917,742	11,487,468	13,101,456
<b>Total by Program</b>	<b>99,704,352</b>	<b>97,642,332</b>	<b>105,637,981</b>	<b>109,727,598</b>	<b>112,491,537</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>					
General Fund	14,378,378	6,761,477	9,057,245	14,531,571	13,299,728
Golf Fund	8,059,810	7,134,685	9,677,101	8,768,607	9,182,810
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>22,438,189</b>	<b>13,896,162</b>	<b>18,734,346</b>	<b>23,300,178</b>	<b>22,482,538</b>
Civilian FTEs	716.25	732.75	744.75	744.75	755.75
<b>Grant Awards</b>	<b>1,239,221</b>	<b>197,320</b>	<b>223,000</b>	<b>223,000</b>	<b>129,000</b>
Grant FTEs	3.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00