



MEMORANDUM

TO: Parks and Recreation Board Members

FROM: Kimberly McNeeley, M.Ed., CPRP, Director
Austin Parks and Recreation Department

DATE: May 24, 2021

SUBJECT: School Park Improvement Projects



The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the Joint Use Agreement (JUA) between Austin Independent School District (AISD) and the Parks and Recreation Department (Department) and to highlight recent School Park improvement projects. School Parks that are jointly owned by AISD and the Department are managed under a Joint-Use Agreement (JUA). Last updated in 1984, the JUA was originally designed to create policy and procedures regarding long-range planning, site selection and acquisition, design, program maintenance and finance. Since that time, there have been significant changes to how each entity operates within jointly owned properties as well as the eco-features now seen at these sites. The goal for the current rewrite of the agreement is to:

- Identify and improve current inefficiencies in the operations and maintenance of these properties;
- Develop clear roles and responsibilities; and
- Create a streamlined and transparent process for community activated improvements moving forward.

In 2017, the Department and AISD began meeting to review and update the original 1984 JUA. In 2018, a review process for community activated projects on joint-use sites was established and integrated into the updated JUA draft. Both organizations anticipate the legal review process to begin in late 2021 with agreement execution in 2022. Staff will bring this agreement to the Contracts and Concession Committee and the Parks and Recreation Board for approval prior to City Council action.

The Department's Long Range Plan identified School Parks as one of the top investment priorities across the park system. By seeking out opportunities to increase public access to non-Department owned parks and open space, School Parks provide a great resource for communities as these sites are available for public use after the school day has ended, on weekends and when school is not in session. There are currently 22 School Parks [located in Austin](#), many in areas where 50% or more of residents live in park deficient areas, have large youth populations, have low household incomes and high poverty levels.

The attached Spring 2021 School Park Project Update report highlights seven projects with five completed in the past two years and two currently underway. Many of these projects were identified through the [Community Activated Park Project](#) (CAPP) program where a school or community member may submit a project idea for a joint-use site or Department property. Once a proposal has been

submitted, members of the CAPP team conduct an initial project feasibility assessment, and if supported, provide project management assistance. For projects located on school properties, the [Cities Connecting Children to Nature](#) Green School Parks assessment is incorporated in the review process. Factors for consideration during these assessments include the following: access to outdoor classrooms or learning discovery areas, usable garden spaces, teacher training on use of outdoor amenities, public access to site after school hours, etc. Project planning involves AISD, the local neighboring community, park adopters, PTA groups, funding partners and other relevant stakeholders.

Should you have any questions, please contact Christine Chute Canul, Partnership Manager, at (512) 974-9515 or Christine.Canul@austintexas.gov.

cc: Liana Kallivoka, PhD, PE, LEED Fellow, Assistant Director
Christine Chute Canul, Partnership Manager, Park Planning Division
Ricardo Soliz, Park Planning Division Manager
Lucas Massie, M.Ed., CPRP, Assistant Director
Anthony Segura, MPA, MS, Assistant Director
Suzanne Piper, DBA, Chief Administrative Officer

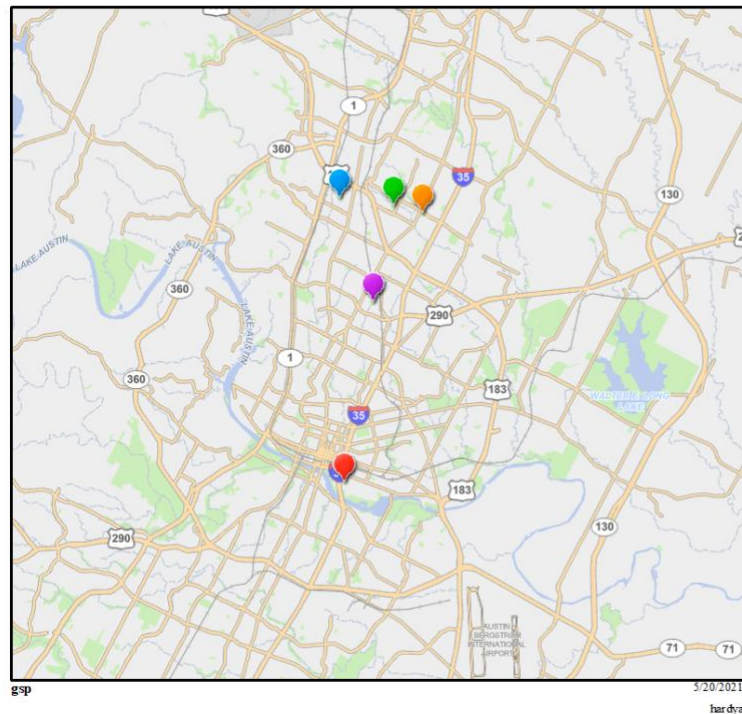
Attachment: Spring 2021 School Park Project Update



UPDATE on School Park Improvement Projects

Spring 2021

School Parks are managed jointly by AISD and PARD through a Joint-Use Agreement. School Parks are available for public use after the school day has ended, on weekends and when school is not in session. There are twenty two School Parks [located in Austin](#).



Reilly School Park - SEL Gardens :

- Project Origination: Community Activated Park Project (CAPP)
- Council District: 4
- Funder: St. David's Foundation – Parks with Purpose Grant
- Funding Amount: \$130,320.00
- Key Partners: Austin Independent School District (AISD), PARD, Austin Parks Foundation (APF), Highland Neighborhood Association, Adopt-a-Park Reilly, WPD
- Assessment of Need: underutilized green space in dense urban area with underserved population, non-active park, need to activate site as refugee safe space, lowest performance per unit of carbon storage & air pollution removal of all parks along Waller Creek corridor, lowest in habitat heterogeneity, low canopy cover, lack of suitable bird and pollinator habitat.



- Improvements: Social-Emotional Learning gardens, free play gardens, pollinator gardens featuring native plants, meditation space, exploratory space, family gardens, pilot project for WPD rain garden and cistern water collection system, an outdoor gathering space with picnic tables; the overall garden space features limestone blocks and edging, mulch, and decomposed granite.
- Completed Spring 2021

REILLY SEL GARDENS MATERIALS OVERVIEW



Wooldridge Elementary Green School Park:

- Project Origination: PARD
- Council District: 4
- Funder: PARD, DSD-Urban Forest, WPD, National Wildlife Federation, 3M – Eco Grant, Office of Sustainability - Bright Green Futures Grant
- Funding Amount: \$238,941.00
- Key Partners: PARD, WPD, DSD, AISD, PEAS, EcoRise, APF
- Assessment of Need: nature deficient area, tree canopy deficient area, need for outdoor classroom space opportunities, lack of green space for community gatherings, large youth population, large low income population
- Improvements: wildflower meadow with native plants, crushed granite walkway, limestone block and nature log outdoor classrooms, tree plantings, a rain garden and water collection cistern, a veggie garden with raised planters, and an outdoor play feature with logs and mulch.
- Completed Fall 2020



Wildflower meadow on campus featuring berms & swales for water management



Wooldridge School Park Soccer Mini-Pitch:

- Project Origination: PARD Partner/Community Activated Park Program (CAPP)
- Council District: 4
- Funder: St. David's Healthcare/Austin FC
- Funding Amount: \$100,000.00
- Key Partners: PARD, Austin FC/4ATX Foundation, Soccer Assist, St. David's Healthcare, U.S. Soccer Foundation
- Assessment of Need: lack of updated & safe lighted soccer fields in neighborhood, large youth population, large low income population.
- Improvements: double tennis courts refurbished into a lighted mini-pitch futsal court.
- Completed Fall 2020



Pillow School Park Project:

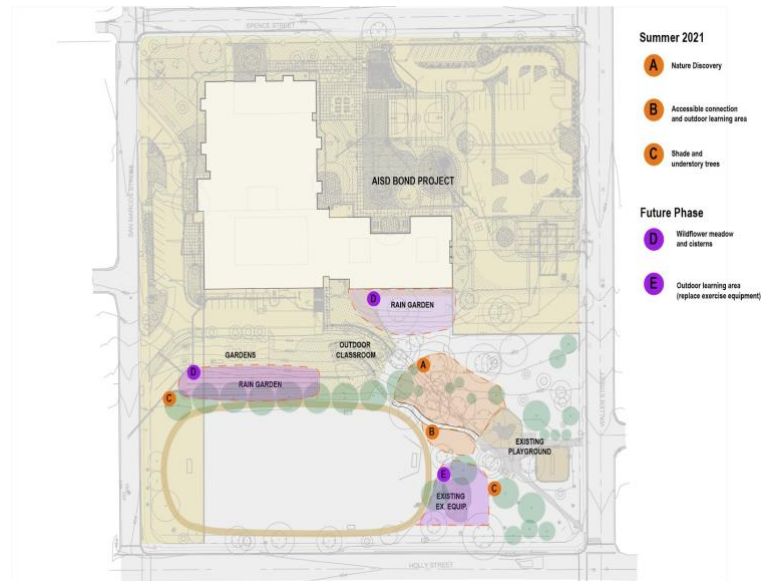
- Project Origination: Community Activated Park Project (CAPP)
- Council District: 7
- Funder: St. David's Foundation – Parks with Purpose Grant
- Funding Amount: TBD
- Key Partners: Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center, Children in Nature Collaborative of Austin (CiNCA), Dr. Jade Florence, Dr. Megan O'Connell, TreeFolks, Pillow Elementary School, AISD, PARD, APF, National Wildlife Federation
- Assessment of Need: nature deficient area, tree canopy deficient area
- Improvements: Planting of approximately 40 trees, pollinator gardens and wildflower pocket prairies featuring native plants, multiple outdoor learning/gathering areas, a living sensory garden featuring stump seats, proprioceptive experiences, and a decomposed granite trail throughout.



- Substantial Completion - Spring 2021

Sanchez Green School Park:

- Project Origination: PARD
- Council District: 3
- Funder: PARD, DSD-Urban Forest, WPD
- Key Partners: PARD, WPD, DSD, AISD, PEAS, EcoRise
- Assessment of Need: nature deficient area, tree canopy deficient area, need for outdoor classroom space opportunities, lack of green space for community gatherings, large youth population, large low income population.
- Improvements: nature discovery area, updated park amenities, accessible pathway connecting the park space to the school, outdoor classroom, shade and understory trees.
- Expected Completion – Winter 2021



Proposed nature play area for Sanchez build.

Multiple School Park Sites - Nature Amenities

- Austin Independent School District (AISD) Outdoor Classrooms
 - Project Origination: Cities Connecting Children to Nature Green School Parks Committee
 - Funder: Austin Parks Foundation
 - Key Partners: PARD, AISD, APF

- Improvements: limestone blocks, tree stumps and mulch to create multiple outdoor classrooms on six AISD joint-use campuses (Pickle, Odom, Pecan Springs, Andrews, Cook, Oak Springs).
- Began Fall 2020 – Ongoing

AISD teachers demonstrating use of outdoor classroom.



Reilly Mustang Button Park – Nature Amenities

- Project Origination: PARD
- Council District: 4
- Funder: PARD
- Key Partners: PARD, APF
- Improvements: large balance logs and a stump jump with a mulch base were added to the empty space in the Mustang Button Park.
- Completed 2019



New nature play features at Mustang Button Park.