

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

DATE: February 2024

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS:

Barton Springs Bathhouse Rehabilitation and Beverly S. Sheffield Education Center Renovation Groundbreaking Ceremony: The Parks and Recreation Department (Department), Capital Delivery Services Department, and the Barton Springs Conservancy hosted the groundbreaking celebration on Thursday, February 22nd at 10 a.m. The outdoor event was held in front of the central rotunda of the bathhouse. For more information about the celebration, visit the [Barton Springs Bathhouse Rehabilitation Groundbreaking Ceremony](#). For more information about renovations, visit the [Barton Springs Bathhouse Rehabilitation](#) project. **District 8**



Barton Springs Bathhouse Rehabilitation Groundbreaking

Jamestown Neighborhood Park: The first community meeting for the Jamestown Neighborhood Park concept plan will take place virtually at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5th. Located at 8323 Jamestown Drive, between Research Boulevard and Maine Drive, this land has been vacant since at least the 1940s. In 2021, the City of Austin acquired a 3.47-acre parcel, then expanded the park by acquiring an adjacent parcel in 2022. In 2023, the park was awarded overall park planning services by the Austin Parks Foundation. With this service, the Austin Parks Foundation, in coordination with the Department, will develop a Concept Plan shaped by community input. **District 4**

<https://www.austintexas.gov/jamestownpark>

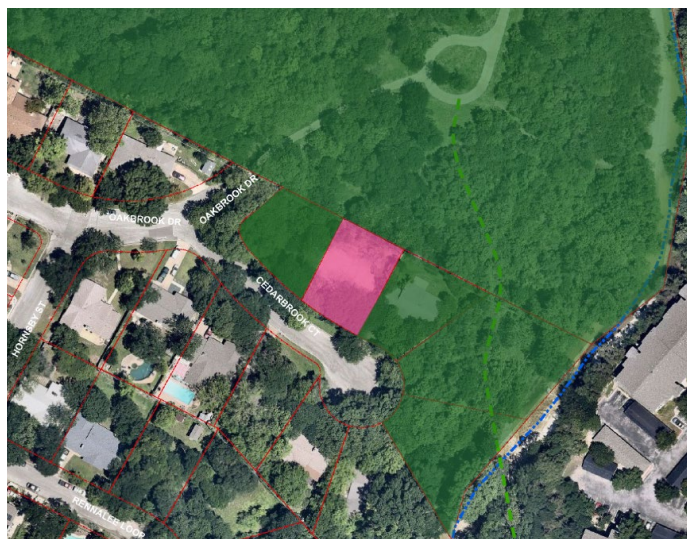
Pease District Park: A community celebration commemorating the installation of the [Dambo Troll](#) will take place on March 15th, from 3-5:00 p.m. Artist Thomas Dambo will be in attendance. Construction on the installation in Pease District Park began in February 2024. The installation is part of an Art in Public Places loan agreement with Pease Park Conservancy. The troll is built from recycled wood sourced from [Harvest Lumber](#), a sustainable sawmill dedicated to giving new life to Austin's fallen trees. Much of the material that will be used to build Austin's troll was milled by Harvest Lumber from the water tower that resided at the [J.J. Pickle Research Campus](#) of the University of Texas at Austin.

District 10 <https://peasepark.org/news/trollfaq>

Bolm District Park Vision Plan: The Department has contracted with Halff Associates to develop a vision plan for Bolm District Park, a 68-acre undeveloped park along the Colorado River at 6700 Bolm Road. The second virtual community meeting was held on February 13th. This meeting shared previous community feedback results, park priorities, and presented two park concepts. A survey will be open through mid-March to garner feedback on these concepts. In addition, the planning team will hold several pop-up meetings near the park over the next month. The plan will continue with one more round of community engagement in 2024 before a presentation to the Department executive team and the Parks and Recreation Board. The vision plan and report are anticipated to be completed in the summer of 2024. **District 3** <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/bolm-district-park-vision-plan>

PLANNING UPDATES:

Parkland Acquisition: On March 7th, the Department will seek City Council approval to authorize the purchase of 306 Cedarbrook Court, a 0.21-acre lot adjacent to the Northern Walnut Creek Greenbelt. This acquisition will function as a pocket park and trailhead, as well as form an assemblage of other park properties, including 300, 302, 308 and 304 Cedarbrook Court, further expanding Northern Walnut Creek Greenbelt at this location. **District 7**



Map of planned acquisition (outlined in pink) expanding parkland along the Northern Walnut Creek Greenbelt.

DEVELOPMENT UPDATES:

John Trevino Jr. Metro Park, Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grant: As a requirement of its grant application for John Trevino Jr. Metro Park at Morrison Ranch, on February 29th, the Department will request to set a public hearing to authorize applying for \$4M in grant funding from the National Parks Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife through the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program. The suggested hearing date will be March 7th. The grant application is due to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department on March 15th. Texas Parks and Wildlife will review applications from across the state and select a subset for submission to the federal government in late April. The Parks and Recreation Department will provide its 1:1 matching funds from the 2018 Bond Program. **Districts 1 and 2**
<https://www.austintexas.gov/departments/john-trevino-jr-metropolitan-park-phase-1-implementation>

Parque Zaragoza Bathhouse Renovation: Notice to Proceed was issued to Majestic Services on February 20th for the rehabilitation of the existing historic Parque Zaragoza Bathhouse. The original 1900-square-foot brick structure was constructed in 1941 by the National Youth Administration, a New Deal agency. The renovation will provide a dedicated Parque Zaragoza pool entry, gender-specific restrooms with showers, and an air-conditioned lifeguard room. In addition, the large indoor recreation space will be opened to the pool and park with door and window openings. The project will follow the Secretary of the Interior guidelines on the rehabilitation of historic structures. **District 3**
<https://www.austintexas.gov/departments/parque-zaragoza-bathhouse>

MAINTENANCE UPDATES:

Metz Neighborhood Park Multi-Use Court and Restrooms: Metz Neighborhood Park Multi-Use Court will undergo maintenance on the drainage system to mitigate mud and debris flowing onto the court during rain events. ATX Bike Polo Social Group and City of Austin/Parks and Recreation Department staff will meet soon to plan a date for the volunteer project and prioritize tasks for the maintenance.

The Men's outdoor restrooms at Metz Neighborhood Park are experiencing plumbing issues. Currently, plumbing lines are being investigated adjacent to basketball court. The restrooms will be taped off with caution tape while the maintenance team evaluates the issue. **District 3**

Martin Athletic Field: Martin athletic field is currently closed for maintenance. During the week of December 25, 2023, an irrigation system pipe cracked. The pipe was repaired and backfilled, allowing for continuation of scheduled upkeep of the field. Following the repair of the pipe, the Parks and Recreation Department Athletic Fields Crew performed aeration and application of pre-emergent herbicide on the field. The field will be closed for a 2-month rest, post-aeration. The reopening is planned for the week of March 24th. **District 3**

Gus Garcia Recreation Center Outdoor Trail Lights: Gus Garcia Recreation Center recently installed two additional outdoor solar panel light posts on the trail behind the Recreation Center to make it safer for walkers along the trail. The lights activate at 5pm and turn off at 10pm. **District 4**

Gus Garcia Recreation Gym Floors replacement: In January of this year, Gus Garcia Recreation Center's gym floor had moisture damage occur in the left middle corner of the floor during the winter weather shelter. The repair cost to replace the damaged floor has been estimated at \$7,200. The Homeland Security Emergency Management Department will fund the repair. **District 4**



Gus Garcia damaged wood gym floor

Delores Duffie Recreation Center: AISD field maintenance has restored the softball field (Field 1) to immaculate conditions in preparation for the varsity softball season for Eastside Early College High School. The Parks and Recreation Department Athletics program has scheduled maintenance for the kickball field at Rosewood (Field 2) in preparation for the Central Austin Kickball League beginning in March. **District 1**

Givens Recreation Center: Staff at the Givens Recreation Center are currently working on the Varsity Generation Garden budget along with the St. David's Foundation budget. The recreation center recently saw lighting repairs in the parking lot and had gates installed on the outside restrooms. The recreation center pool is on schedule to be completed and opened the 1st week of June. Additionally, the maintenance on Givens main water line is complete. **District 1**

Oswaldo A.B. Cantu/Pan American Recreation Center: The Cantu/Pan Am Recreation Center recently had a new score clock and fencing installed on the multi-use field. Additionally, roof leaks from rain damage have been fixed. **District 3**

Bartholomew Pool Slide Motor Repair: The motor on the pool slide at Bartholomew Pool has been repaired allowing for water to be pumped from the pool onto the slide. **District 4**

Dove Springs Pool: An electrical water meter needed replacement at Dove Springs Pool due to a nearby fire. The water meter was replaced and is functioning properly. **District 2**

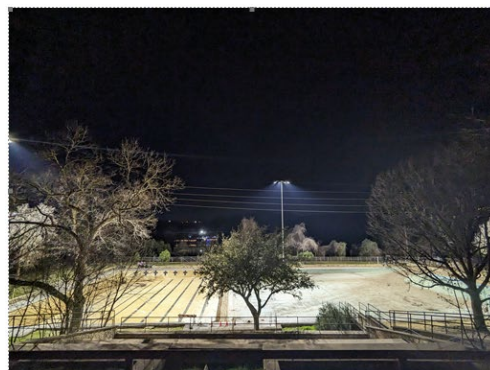
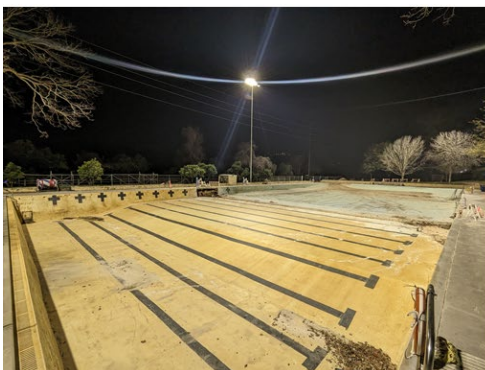
Barton Springs Annual Maintenance Closure: Barton Springs is scheduled for its Annual Maintenance from February 24th through March 8th. During this time the pool will remain closed to the public. The annual maintenance closure will include commercial dredge services that will remove flood debris from the pool. **District 8**

Deep Eddy Pool Rennovations: A wall in Deep Eddy Pool was demolished, and a keyway dug to make room for a new wall in the pool. Steel is being installed in the keyway to reinforce the concrete. New concrete forms will be installed in the near future. **District 10**



Steel reinforcements have been installed in the keyway for the concrete forms

Deep Eddy Pool recently went under renovation for new light fixtures to provide better lighting at the pool. The new lights are LED and have multiple brightness settings, making it easier to manage controls. This update should lead to less maintenance issues in the future. **District 10**



Newly installed light fixtures at Deep Eddy Pool

PROGRAM UPDATES:

Asian American Resource Center (AARC): The AARC hosted high school students from the state's first-ever Asian American Studies class. The program is a part of the curriculum offered at Round Rock High School and the course is taught by English teacher Ann Nguyen. Earlier in the day, the students toured Isamu Taniguchi's Japanese Garden at the Zilker Botanical Gardens. At the AARC, students worked on a zine inspired by Taniguchi and his garden, exploring themes of displacement, homemaking, and belonging. The zine is an ongoing project in partnership between the AARC and the Smithsonian's Asian Pacific American Center (APAC) aimed at highlighting local Asian American histories and heroes and will make its national debut later this year. 37 students participated. **District 1**



Asian American Studies students posing with The Lotus at AARC

Dottie Jordan Recreation Center: The Dottie Jordan Recreation Center hosted Hearts & Crafts Valentine's Day Event on February 13th. The program aimed to spread creativity, love, and connection within the Dottie community. This heartwarming event brought nearly 150 individuals together for an evening filled with laughter and shared moments. Attendees had the opportunity to immerse themselves in a jovial atmosphere which included a bounce house and archery stalls. Guests also had the chance to express their creativity by decorating cookies, designing heartfelt Valentine's Day cards, partaking in various crafts, and capturing special moments at a photo booth. Hearts & Crafts provided a wonderful opportunity to embrace the spirit of Valentine's Day and show love to the community. **District 1**



Valentine's Day Art Project

Oakwood Cemetery Chapel Tour: The Austin High School Black Student Alliance group toured the Chapel and learned about Austin's Black history for Black History Month on February 6th. Fifteen students took part in the tour. **District 1**



Students touring Oakwood Chapel

Turner- Roberts Recreation Center: The Turner-Roberts Recreation center hosted a Thinkery event which saw 50 people from the community attend. Participants created musical instruments from recyclable materials like cardboard pencils, scrap paper, magazines, and toilet paper rolls. Parents had fun creating with children who were eager to take the DIY instruments home. **District 1**

The George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center: The Carver Museum kicked off Black History Month with the second annual Solar Saturday Block-Party on Saturday, February 3rd from 2:00 - 6:00 p.m. This event offered multi-generational programming centered around the 2024 national Black History Month Theme, "African Americans and the Arts". Participants enjoyed activities like "Business Planning for the Self-Employed Artist" financial literacy workshops, creative movement classes with Ballet Afrique, spoken word poetry, community healing arts, and hands-on art activities. The event closed out with a dynamite performance from Bastrop-based band, Deezie Brown, and the museum was abuzz with community connection. 612 community members were in attendance. **District 1**



Deezie Brown performs at the 2024 Solar Saturday Black History Month Kick-off Block Party

Austin Civilian Conservation Corps and The Hungry Hill Foundation: The Hungry Hill Foundation is among a group of organizations that received a proclamation award for addressing immediate needs to the members of its community and the unhoused throughout the greater East Austin area. On February 15th, the Hungry Hill Foundation received this proclamation from Council Member Natasha Harper Madison and Mayor Kirk Watson where they proclaimed that February 15th will be designated as Critical Needs Providers Day. Furthermore, Council Member Natasha Harper Madison went on to stress the importance of having partnerships with organizations such as The Hungry Hill Foundation. **District 1**



Proclamation Presentation



Members of the Hungry Hill Foundation

Dittmar Recreation Center: Dittmar Recreation Center will host Winter Youth Basketball on Fridays and Saturdays. This season, there are over 200 participants who enrolled at Dittmar Recreation Center alone. Dittmar has seen a 42% increase in basketball numbers. **District 2**



Dittmar Recreation Center Youth Winter Basketball 2024

Dittmar Recreation Center: Dittmar Recreation Center partnered with Common Threads to host the first Family Cooking Class at this Recreation Center. The class was at full capacity with 15 people. Attendees made Oatmeal Bars, Mini Frittata, and Orange Sunshine Smoothie. **District 2**



Dittmar Recreation Center Common Threads Family Cooking Class 2024

Dove Springs District Park Planting: The Parks and Recreation Department Urban Forestry team partnered with non-profit and local tree advocacy group, TreeFolks, to plant 186 new trees at the Dove Springs District Park this January and early February. The team planted Central Texas native species Lacey Oak, Mexican Sycamore, and Anacua which will provide shade and clear air benefits to future generations

of park patrons. This was the first partnered planting project between the Parks and Recreation Department Urban Forestry and TreeFolks since 2018. **District 2**



Parks and Recreation Dept Urban Forestry and TreeFolks planting trees at Dove Springs District Park

Rodolfo "Rudy" Mendez Recreation Center: Over 150 youth from 13 elementary and middle schools attended the Rodolfo "Rudy" Mendez Valentine's Day Dance. Participants enjoyed a 2-hour playlist as they anticipated the balloon drop at the end of the night. Parents even stuck around to enjoy the festivities. **District 3**



Attendants enjoying Valentine festivities

South Austin Recreation Center: *Let's Grow Tomatoes!* Was a new program offered at South Austin Recreation Center on February 6th from 6 – 7 p.m. This one-time class had 10 participants, who came to learn the about the whole process of successful tomato growing, from seeds to fruit. **District 3**



The instructor giving a presentation on tomato growing to participants

Gus Garcia Winter 2024 Youth Basketball League: In January, Gus Garcia Recreation Center and the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department began practice for the winter basketball season. This season, Gus Garcia Recreation Center successfully registered 70 participants. **District 4**

Virginia L. Brown Recreation Center's Winter Basketball Program: Winter Basketball has begun, and Virginia L. Brown's 17 participants are off to a great start. 6U and 10U won their first game of the season! Way to go Penguins and Vikings! Saturday, February 3rd was the first game for North Area 6U, 8U, and 10U leagues. Games are held on Saturdays. **District 4**



6U Virginia L. Brown participants playing against 6U Northwest Recreation Center participants

Virginia L. Brown Recreation Center's After School Program: Virginia L. Brown Recreation Center after-school participants got the amazing opportunity to learn about Capoeira! Capoeira is a mix of dance, language, music, martial arts, and acrobatics. The event helped 36 participants improve coordination,

strength, flexibility, social skills, strategy, quick thinking and leadership! It's like playing chess but using your body on the rhythm of the music! **District 4**



After School participants and staff participating in Capoeira Lending Library Enrichment Program

South Austin Senior Activity Center: South Austin Senior Activity Center hosted their 20th annual Mardi Gras Dance on Monday, January 29th. 85 participants enjoyed dinner and a night of dancing with friends to the music of the Nash Hernandez Orchestra. **District 5**



Community members enjoying a night of live music

Northwest Recreation Center, Youth Basketball League: Northwest Recreation Center had 42 participants registered for the North Area Youth Basketball League which began the season on February 2nd. These participants range in age from 5-10 and were split into 5 teams. Team practices for the league started on January 20th. **District 7**

Brush Square Museums' Texas History Trunks Storytime: On February 16th, Brush Square Museums hosted their monthly Children's Storytime at the Susanna Dickinson Museum. In celebration of Black History Month, the staff read the book *Flying Free: How Bessie Coleman's Dreams Took Flight* written by Karyn Parsons and illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. After the story, participants were encouraged to decorate and take home their own balsa wood glider! Ten community members were in attendance. **District 9**



Youth decorate balsa wood gliders as part of a previous Texas History Trunks Storytime in 2023

Dougherty Arts Center: Thursday, February 22nd through Saturday, February 24th, Early Era Collective combined contemporary dance, street style dance, and spoken word into a collaborative production celebrating hip hop culture. This show, titled "Say That!", featured nine local choreographers and dancers from Austin and a spoken word performance by S.C. Says. Early Era Collective is a nonprofit dance company based in Austin, Texas, and is a part of the Artist Access Program offered through the Museums and Cultural Programs Division and the Dougherty Arts Center. Additional information can be found at the Dougherty Art Center's Program and Events page: <https://www.austintexas.gov/page/dougherty-arts-center-programs-and-events>. An estimated 200 people attended this event. **District 9**



Early Era Collective Presents: Say That!

Parks and Recreation Department 2024 Youth Winter Basketball: The Youth 2024 Winter Basketball Program kicked off on February 3rd. With 72 teams from the Southern, Central, and Northern area recreation centers, a total of 200 games are set to take place at 8 locations throughout the season. The preseason classroom trainings for Officials and Scorekeepers took place over two nights at Austin Recreation Center followed by two nights of live training for newly hired staff. Veteran Officials were also present for the live trainings to provide further guidance. These trainings are crucial to the success of Officials and Scorekeepers and the Youth Basketball Program. On average, 20 Officials and 16 Scorekeepers are scheduled to work Friday evening and Saturday games throughout the season. **Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 7**



Youth Basketball Program at George Morales Dove Springs Recreation Center

Mexic-Arte Museum: The Mexic-Arte Museum is hosting the Totally Cool, Totally Art (TCTA) Teen Art Exhibit from February 14th – 28th. The culmination of this exhibit was an awards ceremony on February 22nd from 6 – 7:30 p.m. where teens from all over Austin were celebrated and recognized amongst their peers and families. For over 20 years TCTA and the Mexic-Arte have collaborated to host this event, but it was recently announced the museum would be undergoing renovations, potentially making this the last exhibit at the Mexic-Arte for the foreseeable future. The event saw 100-150 attendees, including artists, staff, participants, and families. **Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 7**



Totally Cool Totally Art Exhibition

Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail: In March, The Trail Conservancy will kick off two returning programs on the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail. On March 9th, their weekly free live music series, Music on the Trail, hosts some of Austin's most loved musicians on the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail for popup musical performances every Saturday. With Music on the Trail, Austinites and visitors can discover new music, hear a song from an Austin favorite, or enjoy a live soundtrack to their morning Trail routine. Upcoming artists include Sarah Sharp, Atlas Maior (Joshua Thomson), and Jennifer Foster.



Photos from previous Music on the Trail series performances

In addition, The Trail Conservancy, in collaboration with the City of Austin Economic Development Department's Art in Public Places Program (AIPP), announced the eight artists selected to participate in this year's TEMPO on the Trail, a public art initiative that invites practicing visual artists and artist teams to create short-term or time-based artworks at various locations along the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail. Installations will take place from March – June of 2024. **Districts 3, 9, 8**

<https://thetrailconservancy.org/programs/music/>

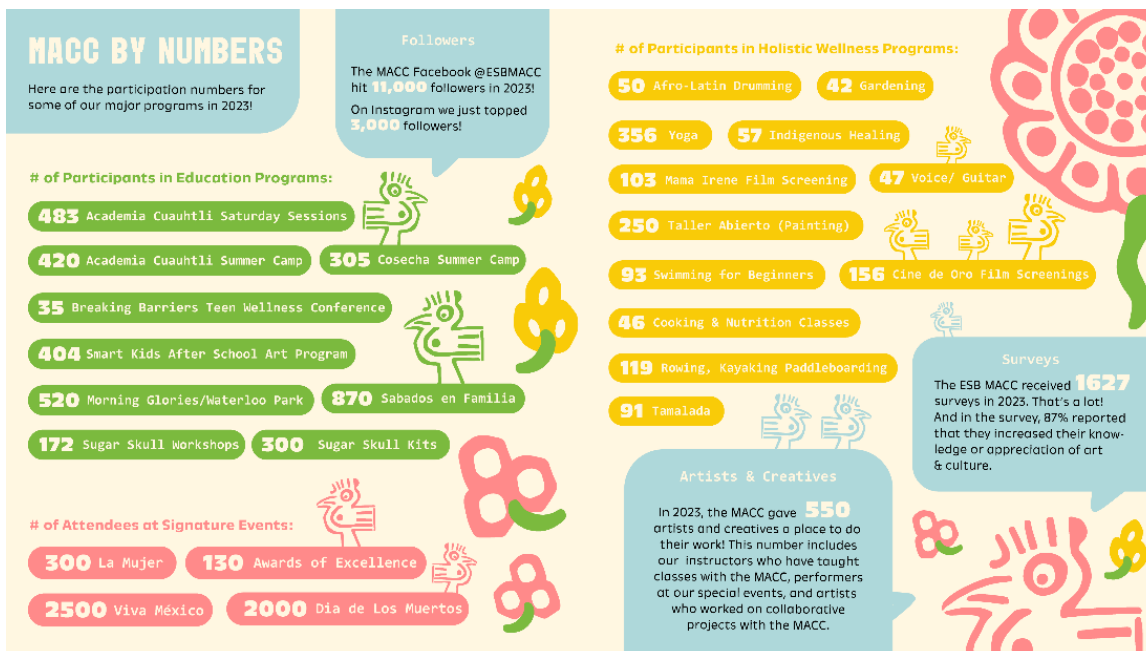
<https://thetrailconservancy.org/tempo-announces-artists/>



Select submittals for the 2024 TEMPO on the Trail installations

Nature Programs Summer Camp Registration: General registration for Nature Programs opened on Saturday, February 24th. Registration took place in-person, over the phone, and online starting at 12:00 p.m. for Austin residents and 2:00 p.m. for non-residents. Participants that had been awarded financial assistance and/or qualified for early registration through the Parks and Recreation Department Inclusion Program registered early starting Saturday, February 10th at 10:00 a.m. Please see the [2024 Nature and Science Center Summer Camp Brochure](#) and the [2024 Camacho Activity Center Summer Camp Brochure](#) for all registration details and instructions. **All Districts**

Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (ESB MACC): The ESB-MACC's End of the Year Report has been published! The report highlights programs, activities, and signature events that the ESB-MACC had the pleasure of sharing with community members in 2023. The full report is available to view online in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). "This annual report reminds us of our successes and wonderful memories. This would not be possible without the immense support from our *comunidad* (community). The MACC exists because of your efforts and dedication to cultura, art and education. Thank you for your support!" - Michelle Rojas, ESB MACC Manager. **All Districts**



Sample page from the ESB-MACC's End of the Year Report 2023

Lifeguard Recruitment, Hiring & Training: As of February 8th, the Aquatics division has successfully recertified 239 full-time (winter and returning) guards and staff for the Fiscal Year 2024. Additionally, the Aquatics division is conducting renewal and full lifeguarding classes for individuals that could not attend the training in November and December of 2023.

Efforts are underway for a marketing and communications campaign to promote the training and hiring of lifeguards for the 2024 swim season in Austin. Communications include street banners, website and print ads, press releases, organic social media, in-person outreach, job fairs and printed materials. It takes about 850 lifeguards to fully staff City pools during the summer months. At this time, the City still needs to hire over 600 lifeguards. Lifeguard training and hiring starts at age 15. Learn more at [LifeguardAustin.com](https://lifeguardaustin.com). **All Districts.**

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES:

Zilker Train: In late January 2024, the Foundation reported the first three train coaches had returned after the cars spent the last several months in Schertz, TX, where they were retrofitted with upgraded lighting, all new air brakes, wiring and couplers. The rest of the train will be arriving in Austin in the coming weeks and the Zilker Eagle will enter the testing phase shortly after. The Foundation has website that provides updates on activities related to the train's progress at <https://www.zilkertrain.org/zilker-eagle-update-jan-2024/>. Additionally, construction updates and pictures of progress can be found at <https://www.zilkertrain.org/zilker-eagle-construction-updates/>.

Recreation Management System: The Department, with the assistance of the Communications and Technology Management Department (CTM), published a Request for Information (RFI) to survey current technology solutions in the Recreation Management industry. Based on the information gathered, the Department worked with CTM to establish a scope of work (SOW) and conduct a formal solicitation for a Recreation Management System. As CTM is the principal information technology department that focuses on the delivery and operations of vital IT infrastructure network and telecommunications services for the City, they facilitated the competitive process. The solicitation was published on June 5, 2023, and was extended and closed on July 20, 2023. Six proposals were received, and all proposals were deemed responsive. The evaluation and contract processes, led by Central Procurement, are in process. Meanwhile, the Department will continue to utilize RecTrac services throughout the process until a recommended vendor is established.

South by Southwest at Brush Square Park: South by Southwest returns to this annual reception location once again. The reception will be held March 4 - 16. [SXSW - Brush Square](#) . District 9

South by Southwest at Auditorium Shores: South by Southwest will hold free community concerts in the park. The concert series will be held March 14 – 16 at Auditorium Shores. [SXSW - Auditorium Shores](#) . District 9