

## **PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

**DATE:** April 2024

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### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS:**

**All Abilities Playground at Onion Creek Metropolitan Park:** The second round of community engagement for the design of an All-Abilities Playground at Onion Creek will take place this spring with a virtual community meeting on May 2<sup>nd</sup> followed by several small group discussions. The Department is partnering with Austin Parks Foundation and their consultant team, TBG Partners and Cultural Strategies, to design and develop the playground in alignment with the 2015 Vision Plan. The project team has developed multiple conceptual ideas based on feedback from the first round of community engagement in January. A final round of community engagement to share a single playground concept is expected to be completed by late summer. A schematic design phase led by Austin Parks Foundation will begin as funding becomes available. **District 2**

<https://www.austintexas.gov/Onion-Creek-All-Abilities>

Interested community members are invited to review initial concepts and provide feedback. Meeting will have ASL and Spanish interpretation and closed captioning available. The playground will be universally accessible and inclusive to all visitors, particularly children with disabilities and special needs, and it will feature innovative design and programming opportunities. This playground is being developed in collaboration with Austin Parks Foundation as part of the 2015 Onion Creek Metropolitan Park Vision Plan.

[Zoom Registration](#)

Saturday, April 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

[Project Webpage](#)

**District 2**

**Bolm District Park Vision Plan- Virtual Community Meeting #3:** Join project team members on Tuesday, May 14 at 6:30 p.m. to kick off the third round of community engagement. Staff will share a concept design as the next step for the vision planning process and launch the third community survey. Come learn about how the previous rounds of engagement have informed the future park planning and get your questions answered about next steps. Spanish interpretation provided.

[Bolm District Park Vision Plan, Community Engagement Round 3 Registration](#)

Tuesday, May 14 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

[Bolm District Park Webpage](#)

**District 3**

This final round of community engagement will present a draft vision plan concept for the park, with presentations to the Department Executive Team and the Parks and Recreation Board to follow. The draft vision plan and report are anticipated to be completed this summer. **District 3**

<https://www.austintexas.gov/departments/bolm-district-park-vision-plan>

**Brownie Neighborhood Park:** In May, the Department's [Community PARKnerships](#) team will organize a series of activities and PARKnership pop-up events to celebrate the planned reopening of Brownie Neighborhood Park to the public. The park was mostly undeveloped, except for a well-loved soccer field, but now boasts a pavilion with picnic tables, a basketball court, playground, nature play, fitness equipment, rain gardens, and more. In collaboration with nonprofits and City partners, Community PARKnerships will offer free interactive programming to encourage exploration of the park, meaningfully engage with neighbors and park visitors, and spread awareness of community resources. In addition to the Playdate in the Park with Austin Parks Foundation and Creative Action planned for May, activities include an Austin Public Library bookmobile visit, loose parts nature play, fitness classes, soccer play, and a plant identification scavenger hunt. Activation efforts will prioritize weekday after-school hours and weekend mornings into early June. Anyone interested in participating should reach out to [PAKnershipsInfo@austintexas.gov](mailto:PAKnershipsInfo@austintexas.gov). **District 4**

**Sir Swante Palm Neighborhood Park:** This month, Waterloo Greenway Conservancy and the Parks and Recreation Department (Department) staff will host two community meetings on April 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> to share an updated design for Palm Park. The project team will present their updated vision for the park based on community input received last fall. All Austinites are invited to come learn about the progress of the Waterloo Greenway project, speak with design team members, and provide additional feedback on the future of Palm Park. **District 9**  
<https://waterloogreenway.org/future/>  
<https://www.austintexas.gov/palmparkproject>



*On the left: Phase II Small Group Meeting at Palm School in October  
On the right: Phase I Community Engagement Kickoff in August at Juan in a Million*

**Butler Trail Comprehensive Signage Plan:** The Trail Conservancy (TTC), in partnership with the Department, will hold community engagement events throughout May as part of ongoing engagement for the Butler Trail Comprehensive Signage Plan, currently in development. TTC and the project team members will update the community on the input received during the November through December 2023 engagement and share how that input is being addressed in the updated signage design and signage location plan. Temporary pilot signs exhibiting two examples of proposed signage types will be installed along the Trail at Auditorium Shores and Festival Beach for community input. A virtual survey will also be available in May for input for one month. The on-trail pop-up events will be held:

- Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at Auditorium Shores

- Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Auditorium Shores
- Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup> from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Festival Beach
- Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Festival Beach
- Tuesday May 21<sup>st</sup> from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at Festival Beach

**Districts 3, 5, 8, 9, 10** <https://thetrailconservancy.org/projects/comprehensive-signage-plan/>

## PLANNING UPDATES:

**South Central Waterfront Combining District and Density Bonus Program:** On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Planning Department, in coordination with the Parks and Recreation Department, will seek Council approval for the South Central Waterfront (SCW) Combining District and Density Bonus Program, previously known as the SCW Regulating Plan. The program is intended to implement the SCW Vision Framework Plan, approved in 2016. This bonus program will be an Opt-In / Opt-Out program in which applicants, within a set structure, contribute community benefits such as but not limited to parkland and park amenities in exchange for increased entitlements. The Parks and Recreation Board was briefed on the program in their March 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, and the program was approved by the Planning Commission with amendments on April 9<sup>th</sup>. **District 9** <https://www.austintexas.gov/page/south-central-waterfront>

## DEVELOPMENT UPDATES:

**Longhorn Dam Bridge:** At the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, City Council approved the authorization of a contract for construction services for the Longhorn Dam Multimodal Improvements project with Jay-Reese Contractors Inc. for a total contract amount of \$22.82 million. Known as the “wishbone” bridge, the new pedestrian and bicycle crossing will be on parkland over Lady Bird Lake and is sponsored by Transportation and Public Works. On April 5<sup>th</sup>, an event was held at Longhorn Shores where Congressman Greg Casar presented a check for \$4.12 million in Federal funding for the project. Construction is anticipated to begin in May 2024 and will take two years to complete. **District 3** <https://www.austintexas.gov/longhorndambridge>



*April 5<sup>th</sup> event celebrating the receipt of \$4.12M in federal funds for the wishbone bridge*

**Highland Neighborhood Park and Reznicek Fields Phase 2 Improvements:** The project, which began construction in December 2022, is nearing completion. The Phase 2 development at Highland Neighborhood Park includes a new walking trail, picnic tables, drinking fountains, tree planting, and new field lighting. The substantial completion of construction is expected at the end of April or early May with open access to the community anticipated in May. A ribbon cutting is anticipated May, date to be determined. **District 4** <https://www.austintexas.gov/HighlandParkProject>

**Scenic Brook Pocket Park:** Construction of Scenic Brook Pocket Park, located at 7300 Oak Meadow Drive, will begin in the Spring of 2024 with completion anticipated in early 2025. The planning of this park was completed in partnership with Austin Parks Foundation and the residents of the surrounding neighborhood in 2020. Austin Parks Foundation continued the partnership and funded the design and permitting for the development of this 0.9-acre park. The Department will fund the approximate \$850,000 park construction through parkland dedication fees. Amenities to be included in the park include a multi-level playground, nature play, picnic areas, loop trail and open play field. **District 8** <https://www.austintexas.gov/pard/scenic-brook-pocket-park>

**Old Bakery Mural Project:** The Department and the Downtown Austin Alliance will present a mural project at the historic Old Bakery to the Historic Landmark Commission on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The project has incorporated a community engagement process to explore ideas about how to revitalize this downtown greenspace through a new Writing on the Walls mural that tells the story of this area of Austin. **District 9** <https://downtownaustin.com/foundation/writingonthewalls/old-bakery-park/>

**Rainey Street Trailhead:** Construction is underway on the new trailhead at the end of Rainey Street and the Butler Trail. Irrigation, plants, and trees were installed in April. Invasive species control methods have been progressing in advance of the upcoming native grass and wildflower seeding, and nature play pieces will be installed in the upcoming weeks. The project is anticipated to be completed this summer. This project is in partnership with The Trail Conservancy. **District 9** <https://thetrailconservancy.org/projects/rainey-street-trailhead/>



*Construction in progress at the Rainey Street Trailhead*

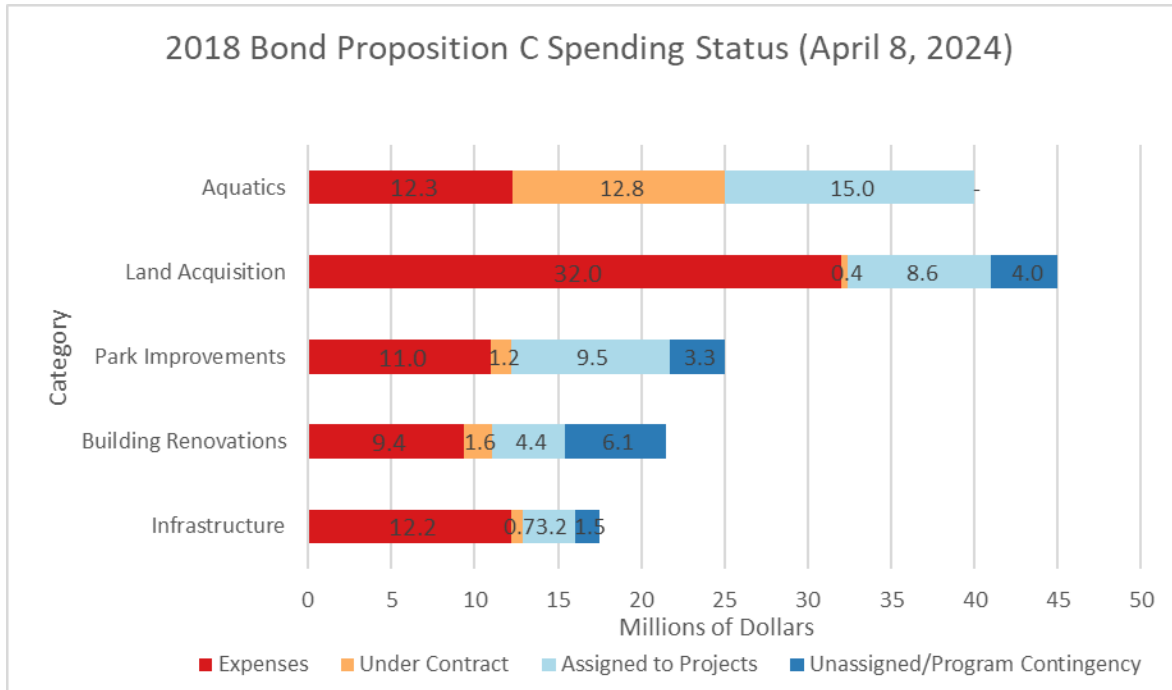


**2018 General Obligation Bond Program Proposition C – Parks and Recreation (\$149 million) Update:**

The Department has spent \$76.9 million (51.6%) of the \$149 million authorized and has a further \$16.7 million under contract. Less than \$15 million (10%) remains unassigned and will be used as contingency to cover escalated costs on existing projects or toward unanticipated and urgent capital improvement projects until the next Bond program is approved, which is currently anticipated in 2026 at the earliest. Recent highlights in the program include:

- Completed Projects
  - [Duncan Neighborhood Park](#) (District 9) held its opening event on April 13 following the completion of construction
  - The improved Alamo Pocket Park (District 1) [playground](#) re-opened to the public in March
- Active Construction
  - Construction of [Colony Park](#) and [Givens](#) Pools (District 1) started in May 2023. Project updates are available on their respective websites.
  - The 1.7 mile [Violet Crown Trail connection](#) between Circle C Metro Park and the Veloway (District 8) started construction in October 2023 and is expected to be completed in late summer 2024
  - Construction for the [Parque Zaragoza Bathhouse Renovation](#) (District 3) project started in February and is expected to be completed in late 2024
  - Construction of [Oertli Neighborhood Park](#) (District 1) started in November 2023. The park is expected to be open by fall 2024
  - Construction of [Brownie](#) and [Highland](#) Neighborhood Parks (District 4) started in December 2022 and both are expected to be reopened to the public in May and completed in June 2024
- In Design
  - The [Beverly Sheffield Northwest](#) (District 7) and [Montopolis](#) (District 3) Pool Renovation projects are both in the site development permitting process and are expected to begin construction after the 2024 summer pool season
  - The [Walter E. Long](#) and [John Treviño Jr.](#) Metro Park (District 1) Vision Plan phase one implementation projects have progressed to the design development phase
  - 90% design documents are in review for the roof and HVAC replacement at Givens Recreation Center. The project is expected to go out for bid by early summer
- Vision Planning
  - Stakeholder engagement for the [Bolm District Park Vision Plan](#) started in October 2023. Two community meetings and two pop-up events have occurred to date and a third community meeting is scheduled for May 14
- Parkland Acquisition
  - City Council approved over \$5.4 million parkland acquisitions at the April 4 meeting:
    - [0.217 acres](#) to serve as a pocket park scale infill park at 2701 E 22<sup>nd</sup> St (District 1) [acquired from the Austin Independent School District]
    - [3.671 acres](#) on the south bank of Slaughter Creek at 10701 S 1<sup>st</sup> St to continue the greenbelt east of S 1<sup>st</sup> St (District 5) [acquired from the Austin Independent School District]

- [10.046 acres](#) on the north bank of Slaughter Creek at 10002 David Moore Dr to connect Mary Moore Searight Metro Park to Bilbrook Neighborhood Park (District 5) [acquired from the Austin Independent School District]
- [3.666 acres](#) at 5506 McCarty Ln contiguous to Williamson Creek Greenbelt (District 8)



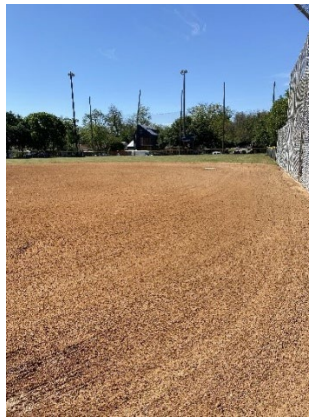
## MAINTENANCE UPDATES:

**Dottie Jordan Recreation Center Exterior Paint Project:** The exterior paint project at Dottie Jordan has been completed. The project included painting all exterior wall panels, gutters, window, the roof and door trim as well as 3 exterior doors. The overall appearance of the center is now much more modern and inviting. **District 1**



*Dottie Jordan Recreation Center Front Entrance*

**Oswaldo A.B. Cantu/Pan American Recreation Center:** Oswaldo A.B. Cantu/Pan American Recreation Center recently finished completion of a renovation project to replace the backstop and fencing on the neighborhood ballfield. This renovation includes varying projects to improve the programming spaces and is highly requested by the community and local groups. The scope of the project also included a new scoreboard, laser grading the infields with the addition of dirt, as well as the installation of new LED lights in Maym provided by Austin Parks Foundation to be installed by the vendor Musco Lights. The light will include new technology that will greatly limit the spillage of ballfield light after hours into the neighboring community homes. **District 3**



*Rosalio G. Duran "Rabbit Fields" completes part of the ballfield renovation project to include new backstop fencing.*

**Metz Splash Pad Maintenance:** Electrical upgrades have been completed at Metz Splash Pad. The upgrades give Aquatics staff better chlorine readings and reduce downtime for maintenance. **District 3**

**Pomerleau Pocket Park Ribbon Cutting:** On April 10<sup>th</sup>, Austin Parks and Recreation held a ceremony celebrating the completion of improvements at Pomerleau Pocket Park. **District 4**

**Deep Eddy Pool Maintenance:** Well #4 at Deep Eddy will receive a new motor and pump. This will help with maintaining appropriate water levels in the future. **District 10**

**Barton Springs Pool Bathhouse Renovation Project:** As Parks and Recreation begins work on the Barton Springs Bathhouse Renovation, the process to include ticket sales at the cafe has started and is in the set-up phase. Additionally, Aquatics staff have begun moving into the temporary staffing areas, pay stations have been relocated due to construction, and staff parking has been moved to the moon tower lot. **District 5 & 8**

**Barton Spring Cleaning:** The deck at Barton Springs has been repaired to prevent injuries. Additionally, the dredging project in the northeast section of the pool was successful. Algae and silt were cleared from the shallow end of the pool. Finally, the skimmer drain was cleared of blockage and irrigation was reset to match summer hours. **District 5 & 8**

## PROGRAM UPDATES:

### District 1

**Save Austin's Cemeteries Spring Tour:** The Austin Parks and Recreation Department, Austin Fire Department, Austin Fire Museum, and Save Austin's Cemeteries are hosting the Save Austin's Cemeteries Spring Tour on Saturday, April 20 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Oakwood Cemetery, 1601 Navasota St. The Spring Tour includes drop-in history tours from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. as well as an Austin Fire Department truck on site from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. For more information:

<https://www.austintexas.gov/news/save-austins-cemeteries-spring-tour-historic-oakwood-cemetery>.

**CelebrASIA:** The City of Austin's Asian American Resource Center (AARC) is hosting its annual CelebrASIA Austin event at [8401 Cameron Rd.](#) featuring performances, art, culture, food, and more! This free, family-friendly festival will take place during Asian Pacific American Heritage Month on Saturday, May 18 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. This is an indoor-outdoor event, so please dress accordingly. The AARC parking lot will only be available for ADA parking, but there will be shuttles from three nearby lots at 1520 Rutherford Lane, 8700 Cameron Road, and 8900 Cameron Road. For more information visit:

[austintexas.gov/aarc](http://austintexas.gov/aarc).

**The George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural & Genealogy Center:** On April 6<sup>th</sup>, The George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural & Genealogy Center hosted its second of four full-site activations in a new series titled "Solar Saturdays". First debuted as the kick-off event for the Carver's Black History Month in 2022, this program aims to drive the museum's mission and vision to be a safe space for Austin's Black entrepreneurs, creatives, and everyone in between. This particular "Solar Saturday" centered around mental health. Attendees were presented with information about peer support and mental wellness resources for communities of color. After a powerful afternoon of community conversation and grief guidance, the event concluded with live music in the museum lobby. "Solar Saturday" saw 160 community members in attendance.



*Community gathered in the Carver Museum lobby for the D. Wood Foundation talk about peer support*



**Turner-Roberts Recreation Center:** Turner- Roberts Recreation Center completed week four of their women's adult volleyball program. The four teams in the league play Wednesday nights from 6:30 – 9 p.m. The season runs for a total of 8 weeks followed by a playoff. All games are played in Turner Roberts main gymnasium.

**Delores Duffie Recreation Center:** On March 20<sup>th</sup>, Delores Duffie Recreation Center in Rosewood Park became part of the Adopt a Park program through the Austin Parks Foundation partnership. Local business owners of Anything Baked Potato and We Can Now have long been advocates of the park and are excited to work with the City, Austin Parks Foundation and the Parks and Recreation Department to serve Rosewood Park and the east Austin community.



*Local business owners pose with the Parks and Recreation Department and Austin Parks Foundation after recently adopting Rosewood Neighborhood Park*

**Givens Recreation Center:** Tuesday, March 26<sup>th</sup> the Givens Varsity Generation program hosted “Painting with a Twist in Time”. The event included over ten seniors, each of which were provided canvases for painting along with miniature easels. Coffee, tea, and snacks was served for those in attendance. The event highlights the expanding Varsity Generation programing and services for the district site.



*Givens Recreation Center Varsity Generation participants painting during the Painting With a Twist event*

**Givens Recreation Center:** The Givens Recreation Center recently completed the installation of their Varsity Generation garden. The addition of the garden allows for sustainable gardening and food education to be incorporated into the Varsity Generation programming. Givens staff will work with facility services to provide additions to the garden, including raised garden beds, over the next few months. Givens will begin garden programming for their Varsity Generation participants in the coming weeks.



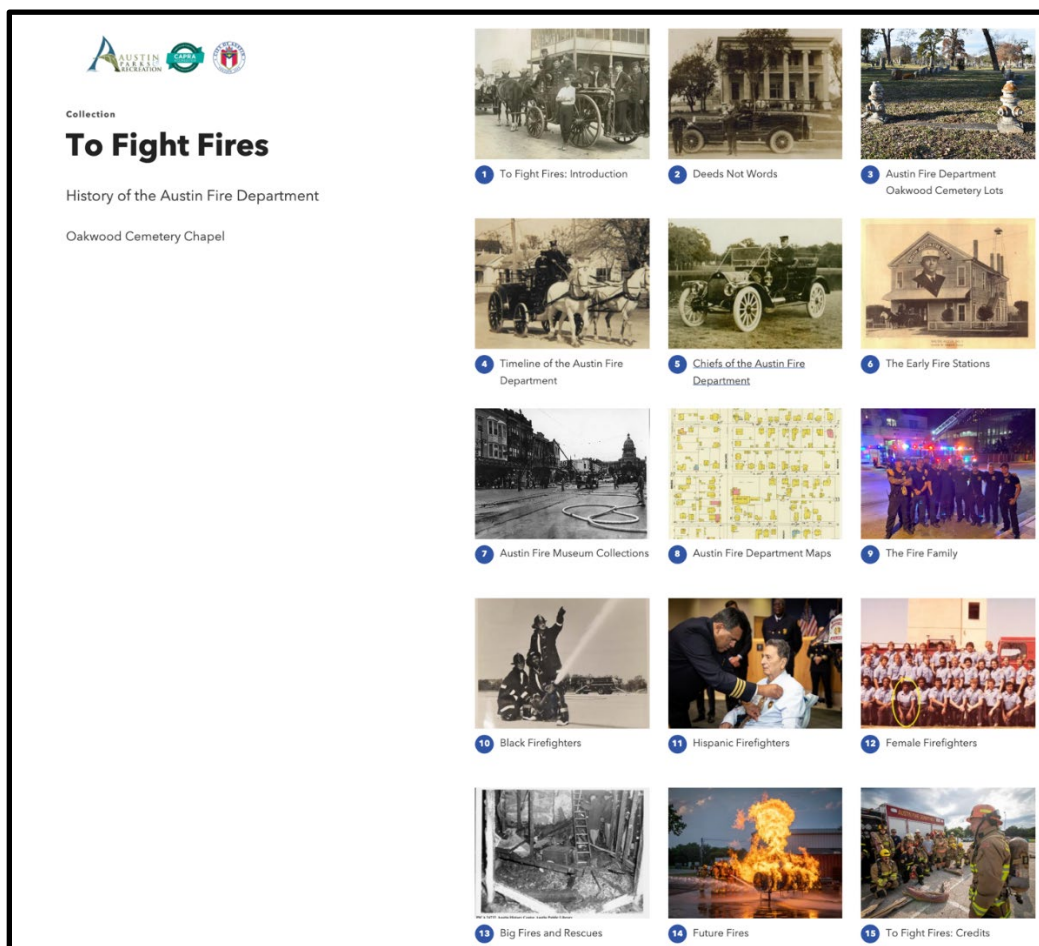
*Givens Varsity Generation participants and staff take a photo in their new program garden*

**The Asian American Resource Center:** The Asian American Resource Center is showcasing two photo exhibits in collaboration with their senior program participants. The first exhibit called *Photovoice: Imagining an Age-Friendly Austin* is a two-part collection of photographs that 14 senior participants to express their preferences and needs regarding respect and social inclusion as it relates to age-friendliness. The exhibit is on-view from April 8<sup>th</sup> - May 31<sup>st</sup> in the Asian American Resource Center ballroom. The second exhibit called *AARC Senior + Staff ARTchiving* centers the stories and voices of seniors and staff members at the Asian American Resource Center who make it an intergenerational space of belonging and healing. This event saw 29 participants.



*Exhibit staff Sraavya Chintalapati hanging art for the Senior + Staff ARTchiving project*

**Oakwood Cemetery Chapel:** In collaboration with Austin Fire Museum and the Austin Fire Department, Oakwood Cemetery Chapel's "To Fight Fires" is an online exhibit that explores the history of the Austin Fire Department and its relationship to Oakwood Cemetery. The exhibit is free to the public and can be accessed online at, <https://arcg.is/1HnqKK>.



*Home page of "To Fight Fires"*

### **District 3**

**Field Guide Festival:** On April 20<sup>th</sup>, Austin held the Annual Field Guide Festival. The food system festival allowed farmers to prepare and teach about seasonal foods, food trends and farm to table operations. The event was held at Fiesta Gardens and saw 500 community members attend.



**Montopolis Recreation & Community Center:** The Montopolis Recreation and Community Center and the Mexican American Culture Center hosted a fun and informative Breaking Barrier Latino Youth event about mental health, made by teens FOR teens. This conference was held on March 30<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Over 100 participants were able to enjoy the fun and conversation this conference provided.



*Mexican American Culture Center hosting their annual Breaking Barriers Mental Health Conference for Teens-by-Teens 2024*

**Oswaldo A.B. Cantu/Pan American Recreation Center:** On March 29<sup>th</sup> Oswaldo A.B. Cantu/Pan American Recreation Center hosted a Spring Fling event. Approximately 125 community members participated in an egg hunt. Additionally, resource tables with IDEA Academy, Parks and Recreation Departments Aquatics, and various health care providers were on site to provide information to those in attendance. During this event, the Oswaldo A.B. Cantu/Pan American Recreation Center gave away seven donated bikes.



*Oswaldo A.B. Cantu/Pan American Recreation Center hosts their Spring Fling easter egg hunt and carnival*

**Rodolfo "Rudy" Mendez Recreation Center:** About 400 family and friends came out to Metz Park on Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup> for Easter activities. Children in attendance had a chance to play table games, take pictures with the Easter bunny, win door prizes, collect candy, and of course participated in an Easter egg



hunt. There were Easter basket winners in each age division. The event went from 6 – 8 p.m. and was free and open to the public.



*Participants at Mendez's easter event showing off their easter baskets*

### **District 5**

**South Austin Senior Activity Center:** South Austin Senior Activity Center hosted their annual Easter event on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 9 – 11 a.m. The event had over 50 attendees. Participants were able to enjoy Easter themed games, music, dancing, and photos with the Easter Bunny. There was also a raffle for prizes. All guests were treated to snacks, drinks, and candy.

### **District 6**

**Pickfair Community Center:** Pickfair Community Center hosted the Art in Cahoots program on April 15<sup>th</sup>. This program, facilitated by staff from the Dougherty Arts Center, includes sensory, multi-disciplinary, process-based arts activities for 15 registered children and caregivers to experience together.

### **District 7**

**Northwest Recreation Center:** Northwest Recreation Center hosted the annual Tiny Tots Bunny Bonanza event on March 29<sup>th</sup> for children ages 3–5. Around 50 children participated in the event. The kids played carnival games, made crafts, and enjoyed an egg hunt.

### **District 8**

**Zilker Kite Festival:** On April 14<sup>th</sup>, the Austin City Council cosponsored the Annual Zilker Kite Festival in Zilker Park.

**Plant Shows and Sales at Zilker Botanical Garden:** The Zilker Botanical Garden hosted its biannual Cactus & Succulent Sale on March 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> and the Iris Society Show & Sale on April 13<sup>th</sup>. These plant shows and sales are hosted by dedicated Garden Club members who also offer education and advice on gardening.

**Free Day at Zilker Botanical Garden:** The Zilker Botanical Garden hosted one of eight annual free days on April 8<sup>th</sup>. Admission was free with advance online reservations recommended to ensure access. The Garden also fostered access to the Rose Garden and South Lawn areas for total eclipse viewings for over 450 people. For more information on admissions and a full list of upcoming free days, visit [Hours & Admission - Zilker Botanical Garden \(zilkerbotanicalgarden.org\)](https://zilkerbotanicalgarden.org/hours-admission).

## **District 9**

**Austin Reggae Festival:** From April 19 – 21, Austin celebrated the Annual Reggae Festival at Vic Mathia Shores. Proceeds benefited the Central Texas Food Bank. The event entertained over 10,000 community members a day.

### **District**

**Education with Heart:** The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center in partnership with Austin Independent School District and Academia Cuauhtli invite families, educators, community advocates and members to join us for a community celebration on Saturday, May 4 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Mendez Middle School, 5106 Village Square Dr. Celebrate the Community Love Hub and Academia Cuauhtli's 10-year anniversary with fun hands-on activities, performances by local musicians and dancers, immigration and public health community resource workshops, demonstrations of afterschool clubs and programs, and workshops for teachers. For more information: [austintexas.gov/news/education-heart](https://austintexas.gov/news/education-heart).

**Hancock Recreation Center's Camp Day:** Hancock Recreation Center's March 29<sup>th</sup> camp day was a success! Activities included kid friendly games like Ultimate Kickball, Meteor Shower, and Eternal Dodgeball. The day concluded with an Ultimate Egg Hunt for 19 registered participants!



*Some of the participants posing with Program Specialist, Rosa Ramirez, before the Egg Hunt!*

**Lamar Senior Activity Center:** Lamar Senior Activity Center took 12 participants on a guided tour through the grounds at Zilker Botanical Gardens. Participants were given the opportunity to learn about the history behind this historical site and explore the grounds of this hidden gem in Central Austin.

**Elisabet Ney Museum: Naturalists:** On April 6<sup>th</sup> participants joined museum educators and the Ney’s community partner, The Refugee Collective, in Formosa’s historic landscape. Participants created natural dyes and shared in Ney’s naturalist spirit. All supplies were free to the public. The series will continue each month through June. Forty-five community members were in attendance.



*Naturalists at the Ney led by Museum Educators and The Refugee Collective*

**Dougherty Arts Center Garden:** From March 30<sup>th</sup> through April 19<sup>th</sup>, the Dougherty Arts Center’s Works In Progress (WIP) interns painted a mural on the Dougherty Arts Center’s side garden. The mural was designed by WIP interns with guided feedback gathered from Dougherty Arts Center staff on what represents the surrounding community. The Dougherty Arts Centers Works in Progress internship is an immersive program that prepares teens living in the Austin metropolitan area for careers in the arts. Additional information on the program can be found at the Works In Progress webpage: <https://www.austintexas.gov/worksinprogress>.



*Mural in Progress by Works In Progress Interns*

**Old Bakery and Emporium:** On March 30<sup>th</sup>, the Old Bakery and Emporium opened “Eyes to See”, an exhibition that features the work of native Texan artist and retired military veteran Kurt Ritterpusch. The collection of work represents three years of Kurt's recent paintings. Inspired by the beauty of The United States, Kurt's work depicts the organic, inorganic, rural, and urban. His work aspires to truly see his subjects, not just look at them. 121 community members visited the exhibit.



*Kurt Ritterpusch in front of his work.*

**Statesman Capitol 10K:** On April 7<sup>th</sup>, The Annual Statesman Capitol 10K run took place in downtown Austin through Auditorium Shores.

**Susanna Dickinson Museum:** Over the month of April, the Susanna Dickinson Museum will be using social media to feature some “Planet-Saving Pioneer Practices” that are still relevant and utilized today. Topics in the series include information about sustainable living practices observed by indigenous groups local to Texas, like the Comanche, Apache, Coahuiltecan, Tonkawa and others. The series is expected to reach an estimated 1300 community members per social media post.



*Social media graphic introducing Earth Month with Susanna*



**The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center:** The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center hosted its 13<sup>th</sup> annual La Mujer event, which celebrates women and women-identifying individuals in Austin’s Mexican American and Latina/o/x/e community. For the first time, the ESB MACC partnered with The Cathedral Art Gallery to create an intimate space where women are seen, heard, and empowered. The event featured mental health and wellness programming from organizations such as Contigo Wellness and Austin Public Health, a BIPOC-centered marketplace by Frida Friday ATX, and visual art exhibits curated by Monica Cenicerros of the Cathedral. Families enjoyed free children’s activities and workshops from partners like Creative Action. Workshop #1 was Sound Healing with Andrea Cortes from the Mind, Body and Music Center, Workshop #2 was a Rebozo (Shawl) Workshop with Irasema from Manos Magicas, and Workshop #3 was a Somatic Writing Workshop with poet & author Leticia Urieta. 250 Community members were in attendance.



*Women and children/ people of all ages lift up women at “La Mujer” event*

**Community Block Party, Rogers Washington Holy Cross Neighborhood:** On April 20<sup>th</sup>, the Department participated in a block party in the Rogers Washington Holy Cross Neighborhood. The event celebrating this storied East Austin neighborhood was held in partnership with the City of Austin’s Equity-based Preservation Plan initiative. The Planning Department co-sponsored the free, open event with Preservation Austin in conjunction with Preservation Austin’s Homes Tour that weekend. The block party included a DJ, a scavenger hunt for kids, tours of the neighborhood, food from local businesses, and opportunities to give feedback on the draft preservation plan. This tight-knit neighborhood, the subject of the 2021 Virtual Homes Tour, tells the story of the Black experience in postwar Austin and features the works of groundbreaking Black architect John S. Chase, FAIA.

### **Multiple Districts**

**NASA “What’s Up in the Night Sky: Skywatching Tips for the Casual Observer” Webinar:** South Austin Senior Activity Center, Conley Guerrero Senior Activity Center, and Lamar Senior Activity Center all hosted a combined webinar led by NASA on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. 77 seniors joined in to learn about all that can be seen in the night sky and how to be a casual observer. Participants got to ask questions about space and learn with their peers. **District 1, 5, 9**



*Participants watching webinar*

**Dittmar Recreation Center Flag Football:** Dittmar Recreation Center hosted an end of season tournament for all flag football participants. Over 100 participants registered were able to enjoy burgers and hot dogs as well as end of season trophies. **District 2, 5**



*Dittmar Recreation Center Flag Football 2024*



**McBeth Recreation Center Art in the Park:** On April 11<sup>th</sup>, McBeth and Art Spark Texas partnered up to present Art in the Park, the annual outdoor hands-on arts festival for children and adults of all ages and abilities at Fiesta Gardens. This inclusive grassroots festival has been around for over 25 years and truly captures the spirit of Austin with its combination of the arts, outdoors, and access for the entire community. 500 students and teachers enjoyed art activities, music, performances on the stage, and food. **District 5, 8**



*Austin Police Department Craft Table at Art in the Park*

**Zilker Shuttle:** Plans are underway for the free Zilker Shuttle service to return this summer starting Memorial Day weekend, Saturday, May 25 through Labor Day weekend, Monday, September 2. The shuttle will operate on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the summer, and also Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Labor Day. Hours are still being determined.

**District 5 & 8**

### **All Districts**

**TX ASLA Staff Session and Tours:** From April 24–26<sup>th</sup>, the Department will support several sessions and tours at the annual conference of the Texas Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, being held at the Palmer Events Center. From the conference [website](#), “The 2024 Conference Theme is “PIVOT”. The climate crisis has reached a critical turning point. Texas ASLA has an opportunity to refocus, and adjust the scope and direction of our practice towards new ideas, products and solutions. By leveraging the collective experience and knowledge of our profession, we can PIVOT toward sustainability and climate positivity.” Department staff-led events include: “Historical, Sustainable, Accessible – Renovating a Downtown [Brush] Square” with Kim McKnight, Program Manager, Historical

Preservation and Tourism; “Alliance Children's Garden: A Guided Tour Exploring Funding, Fun, and Local Inspiration,” with Patrick Beyer, Project Manager, “The Red Line Parkway Biking Tour,” with Brianna Frey, Park Planner Sr.; and tours of the Seaholm Waterfront with Kim McKnight and the Waterloo Greenway Confluence construction site with Lana Denkeler, Project Manager.

Sessions: [https://www.texasasla.org/page/2024ConferenceAgenda\\_customPg7](https://www.texasasla.org/page/2024ConferenceAgenda_customPg7)

Tours: [https://www.texasasla.org/page/Tours\\_24](https://www.texasasla.org/page/Tours_24)

**Total Eclipse of the Central Texas Heart Event:** The Austin Parks and Recreation Department participated in the total solar eclipse event that brought over 5,700 visitors on parkland. The Austin Nature & Science Center and the Parks and Recreation Department partnered with the University of Texas on April 8<sup>th</sup> to make telescopes with solar filters available at designated viewing locations in parks across the city. Parks and Recreation staff were available from 12 - 3 p.m. with eclipse glasses and information about the eclipse. To practice the Leave No Trace initiative in Austin’s parks, eclipse glasses were recycled at receptacles or recycled at Austin Parks and Recreation facilities and Austin Public Libraries through April 26<sup>th</sup>.

The Austin Nature and Science Center also partnered with NASA-affiliated scientists that hosted eclipse and space presentations April 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> in celebration of the eclipse. Planetarium and hands-on activities to prepare for the eclipse were available as well as a 2D version of the Perseverance Rover and the Mars-scape. The ROV-E, a six-wheeled rover, was available for viewing.

Viewing Location	District	# of Visitors
Colony District Park	1	50
Conley-Guerrero Senior Center	1	60
Onion Creek Soccer Complex	2	100
Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Metropolitan Park	3	15
Gustavo “Gus” L. Garcia District Park	4	120
Mary Moore Searight Metropolitan Park	5	400
Pickfair Pocket Park	6	400
Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park	7	450
Zilker Metropolitan Park – The Great Lawn	8	4,000
Commons Ford Ranch Metropolitan Park	10	150





*Over 5,700 people visited local parkland to enjoy Parks and Recreation and UT eclipse activities*



*Photographed shots of the total lunar eclipse from parkland*



*Even the Stevie Ray Vaughn Memorial at Auditorium Shores was prepared for the eclipse!*

**Inclusion Support Services Training Opportunities:** Inclusion Support Services has been hard at work preparing staff for an Inclusive summer by offering 45 staff trainings. Trainings topics include disability awareness, working with youth with challenging behavior, making decisions in an emergency, and verbal de-escalation strategies. A new addition to our training line-up has been hands-on workshops for Recreation Specialists. During these workshops, staff have been guided through “how-to’s” and given the materials to create Inclusion support supplies and visuals. Recreation Specialists, with the support of Inclusion Support Services, are creating the tools needed to ensure universally designed programs are available for everyone to a safe, inclusive, and positive experience this summer!



*Inclusion Resource Workshop – Making Visual Schedules*

**Lifeguard and Summer Camp Staff Hiring:** Marketing, communications, and outreach will continue through the beginning of June. As of April 11, 401 lifeguards have been hired. Promotions will continue to focus heavily on \$20.80/hour starting wage and \$400 Lifeguard Training Stipend. Additional benefits include free bus pass, paid time off, free uniforms, and flexible schedules. Lifeguards are hiring ages 15+ and summer camp staff are hiring ages 18+. [AustinTexas.gov/SummerJobs](https://austintexas.gov/SummerJobs)

## ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES:

**The Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex:** Both the ARCDC/MYEC Facility Management Agreement and the ARCDC Administrative Agreement expire on September 30, 2024. Per the Facility Management Agreement one five-year extension term remains, however, the ARCDC has voted to extend the agreement for a one-year period in order to allow time to further clarify the vision for the facility. Likewise, it has voted to extend the Administrative Agreement to one year to allow time to develop a clear definition for the roles and responsibilities of both entities.

**Department Staff on the Health Product Declaration Collaborative Board:** Sarah Talkington, PE, LEED Fellow, nbi Sr. Fellow, WELL AP, TRUE Advisor, Department Consulting Engineer, Sustainability and Resilience, is beginning her third year serving on the Health Product Declaration Collaborative (HPDC) Board. The mission of the HPDC is to help manufacturers understand potential forced-labor issues in their supply chain and manufacturing processes, as well as promote transparency and disclosure for

building materials. To that end, the HPDC developed the HPD Open Standard, which provides a standardized format for manufacturers to disclose product contents and associated health information, empowering stakeholders to create healthier buildings. Sarah is proud to volunteer with a project that enables manufacturers, designers, and building owners to select and install building products that don't contain toxins or rely on human exploitation, and grateful to the City of Austin for supporting this work. For more information, visit: <https://www.hpd-collaborative.org/>