

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

*Angela Means, Interim Director
September 2024*

**PARKS AND
RECREATION
BOARD**

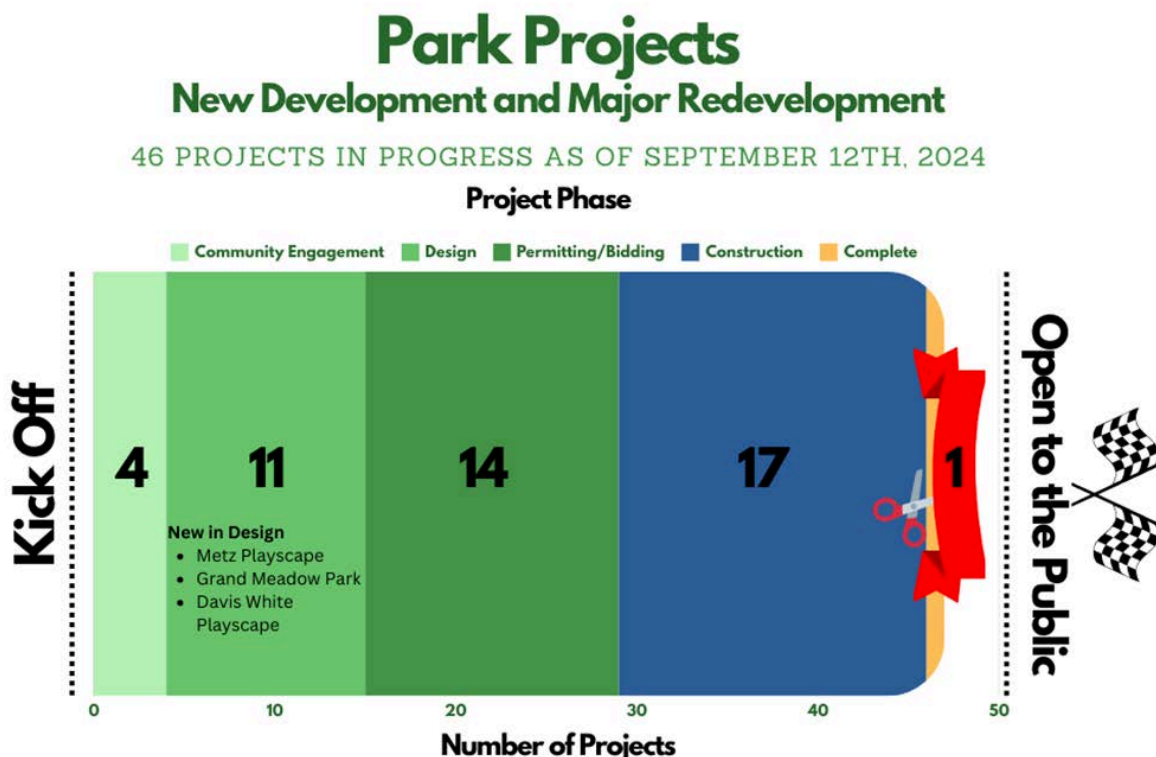


Ensure Parkland Offers Relief from Urban Life

- Natural Resources Updates
- Parkland Development Updates

Parkland Development Updates:

Onion Creek Metro Park Pavilions: Construction is complete on two new picnic shelters at the southern end of Onion Creek Metro Park, located at 8652 Nuckols Crossing Rd. Each pavilion features a grill, four picnic tables, and solar lighting. Additional irrigation improvements will be completed at a later date. The pavilions are now open to the public. **District 2**



Natural Resources Updates:

Emergency Response Training: On September 6th, PARD Land Management hosted the field component of the S-270 Basic Air Operations course at the Decker Tallgrass Prairie Preserve. This training provided supervisory staff with skills for interacting with airplanes and helicopters during emergencies including search and rescue, and wildfires. The interagency collaboration proved invaluable for building relationships.

Participants included staff from Land Management, Urban Forestry, Pflugerville Fire Department, Manor Fire Department, Austin Fire Department, Travis County Starflight, Austin Police Department Air Support, Travis County Parks, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Texas A&M Forest Service.



Students and instructors from eight land management and fire suppression agencies participated in joint air operations training at the PARD Decker Tallgrass Prairie Preserve.



Students received instruction and practice time communicating with aircraft and directing water drops on “live fire” within the setting of a small, prescribed burn.

Prescribed Burns on Parkland: Land management agencies in Central Texas typically conduct prescribed burns during winter and summer months when conditions are best suited for accomplishing management goals. These controlled burns are critical to enhancing climate resilience and reducing wildfire risks.

- Prescribed Burns Conducted:
 - Winter 2023: 3 burns and several pile burns covering 315 acres at the Louis Rene Barrera Indiangrass Wildlife Sanctuary, Decker Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, Onion Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, and Blunn Creek Nature Preserve
 - Summer 2024: 2 burns at Decker Tallgrass Prairie Preserve
- Prescribed Burns Planned:
 - 3 burns covering 332 acres at Indiangrass Wildlife Sanctuary



PARD fire-qualified staff use a drip torch to ignite tall grass within a prepared burn unit. Additional fire staff operating specialized equipment follow from behind. Also shown, a mow-line used to help contain the fire.

Wildfire Risk Mitigation on Parkland: PARD's Land Management program spearheads the implementation and maintenance of wildland fuel reduction initiatives on parkland to mitigate wildfire risks to natural resources, park assets, and adjacent structures. During this calendar year, the following actions were taken:

- Approximately 16,187 linear feet (3.1 miles) of new shaded fuel breaks were established.
- An additional 7,000 linear feet (1.3 miles) were maintained.

Expand and Improve Park Access for All

- Planning and Development Updates
- Special Ceremonies (groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings, etc.)

Planning Updates

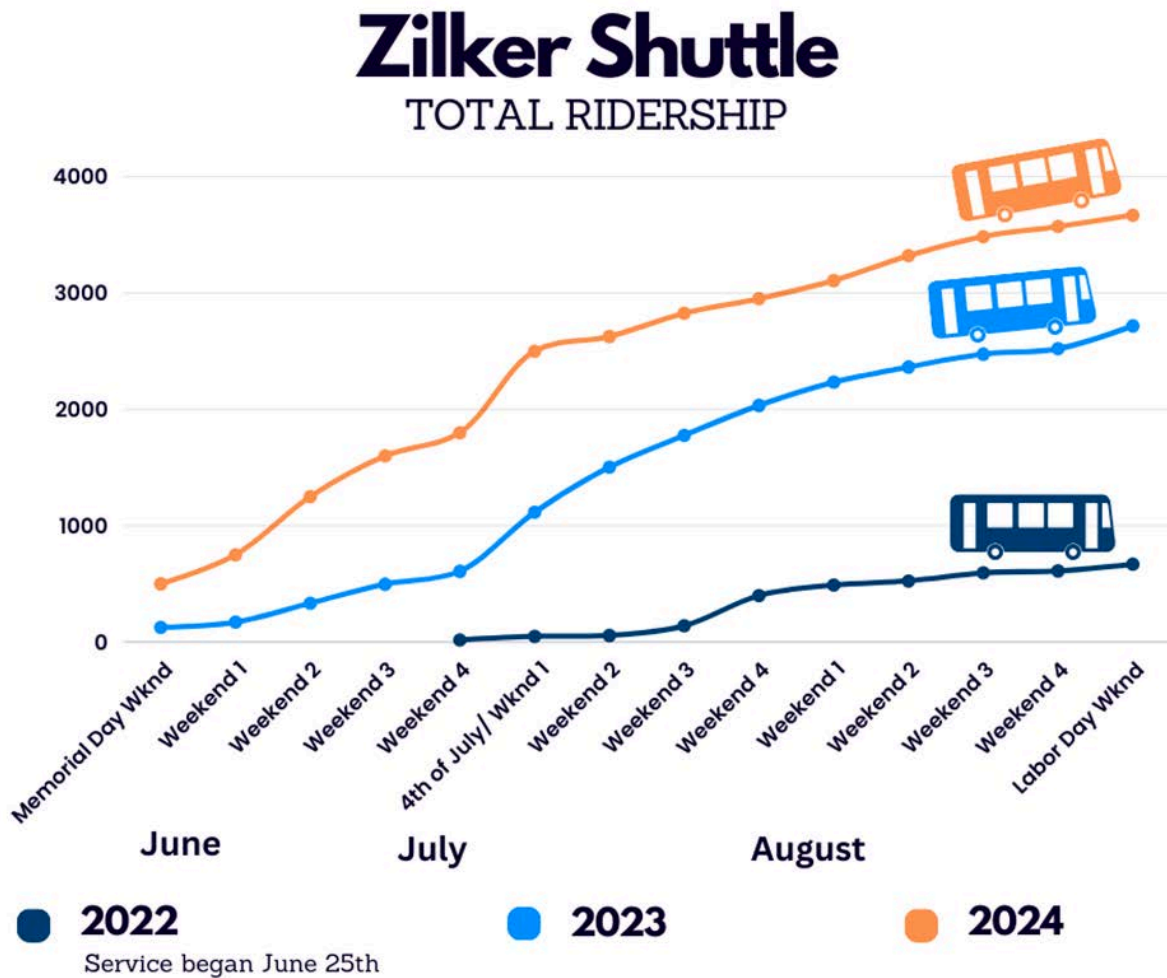
Community Engagement

PARK PROJECTS
MAY - AUGUST 2024



5 Public Meetings, 2 Pop-Ups

Zilker Shuttle Program: The Zilker Park Shuttle successfully concluded its third season over Labor Day weekend. Operating every Saturday and Sunday from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day from noon to 8:30 p.m., the shuttle offered free validated parking at One Texas Center, 505 Barton Springs Road with transport to the park and return pick-ups from the Stratford gravel parking lot. This year, the number of buses increased from two to three, resulting in a 25% increase in ridership from 2023. **Districts 5 and 8**

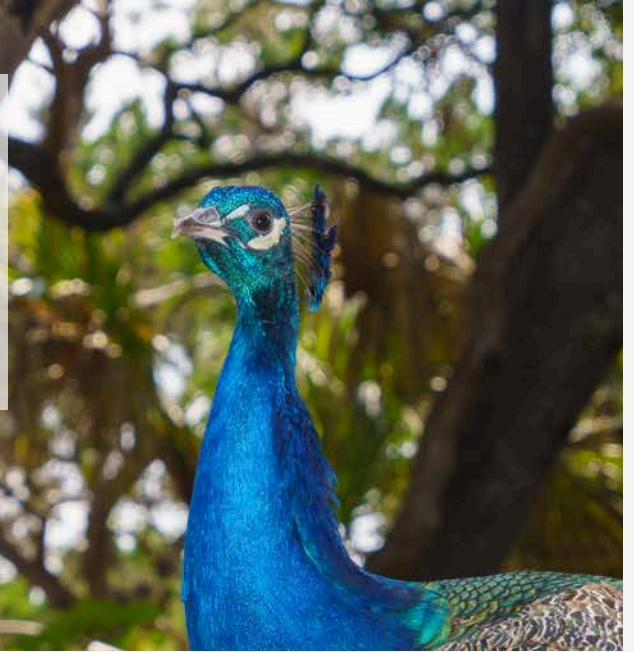


Special Ceremonies Updates

Bull Creek District Park Improvement Ribbon Cutting Ceremony: On September 17th, PARD hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony at Bull Creek District Park, located at 6701 Lakewood Drive, to celebrate the completion of parkland and facilities improvements. **District 10**

Activate and Enhance Urban Public Spaces

- Museums and Cultural Programs and Exhibits
- Historic Tourism Updates



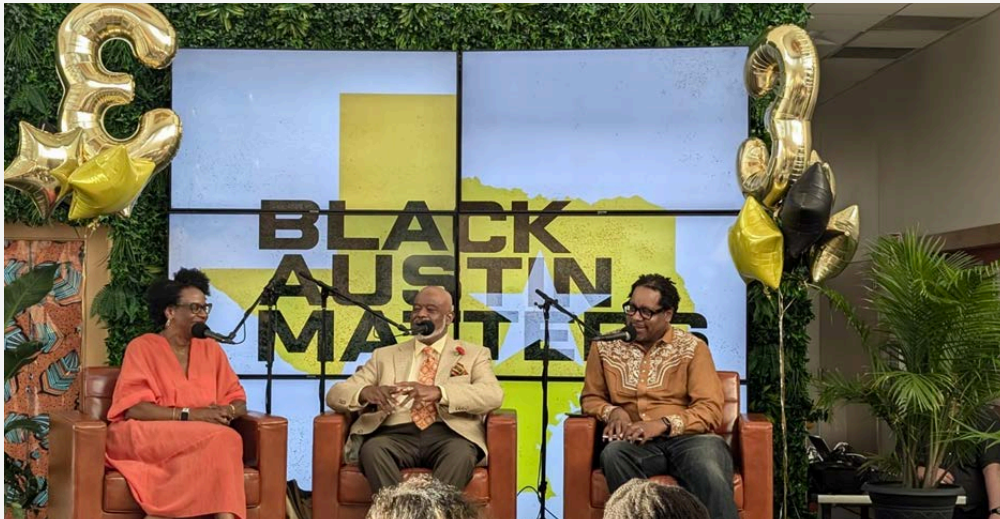
Museums and Cultural Programs and Exhibits

Senior Garden: As the summer heat subsides, the Asian American Resource Center (AARC) has been preparing its Senior Garden for planting, with support from St. David's Foundation and Resolution Gardens. The garden provides space for seniors and community members to work together to plant and harvest fresh vegetables, learn about growing techniques and practice together, and spend time outside meeting new people. This month, AARC held Garden Club meetings to bring together volunteers and senior program participants in planting new crops for the upcoming fall season, which include Swiss chard, cilantro, long beans, and cucumbers. Participants: 27 | **District 1**



Seniors and community members plant new vegetables in the AARC garden for the upcoming fall season.

Launch of Black Austin Matters Season 3 Podcast: The George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center partnered with local Austin radio stations KUT 90.5 and KUTX 98.9 Studios for the launch of the Black Austin Matters Season 3 podcast, featuring a live taping at the museum’s Drum. On Thursday, August 29th, from 6–9 p.m., hosts Richard J. Reddick and Lisa B. Thompson engaged in a discussion with Austinite Harrison Eppright about his love for the city and passion for Austin’s Black history. Following the interview, a community Q&A session allowed for further engagement, while a short and joyous reception facilitated connections between returning and brand-new museum visitors. Participants: 169 | **District 1**



Richard J. Reddick and Lisa B. Thompson in conversation with Austinite Harrison Eppright for the Black Austin Matters Season 3 Launch event at the George Washington Carver Museum

Viva México Celebration: The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican-American Cultural Center (ESB-MACC) hosted its 17th annual Viva México celebration on September 14th from 5–9 p.m., at the Oswaldo A.B. Cantu/Pan American Recreation Center. This vibrant outdoor celebration featured live mariachi music, folkloric dance performances, and a variety of family-friendly art activities, along with a vendor market. Claudia Talamantez from Univision served as the Master of Ceremonies for the evening’s entertainment, while Mexican Consul Humberto Hernández Haddad delivered the *Grito de Independencia*. A marketplace from Frida Friday ATX showcased local vendors offering original artwork, clothes, jewelry, and gifts that support women and BIPOC local artists. **District 9**



Photo collage from Viva Mexico 2023, by Ulises Garcia Vela

Austin Museum Day: The Elisabet Ney Museum hosted its annual Austin Museum Day on September 22nd, celebrating its current exhibit, *Super Modeling*. This event will delve into the various techniques that Elisabet Ney used to create her neoclassical sculptures curated by Michelle Sefcik.

Austin Museum Day is a community initiative funded by the Austin Museum Partnership and features special programs and activities at dozens of local museums and cultural institutions across the area. This year, the museum will present a portrait sculpting demo by local artist, Dana Younger, alongside a variety of interactive sculpting activities, portraiture lessons, and edible sculptures for participants to take home. Anticipated Attendees: 220 | **District 9**



Participants at a workshop at Ney Museum

Visual Artist Residency Program (VAR):

The Dougherty Arts Center's Visual Artist Residency Program has now entered the fourth month of its six-month residency period. At this stage, the VAR artists are refining their techniques and preparing a cohesive body of work for their exhibition scheduled to open in November 2024. This program offers Austin ceramic artists space, facilities, time, and professional interactions to cultivate and advance their ideas, skills, abilities, and focus as practicing artists. Applications are currently being accepted for the Fall 2024 Program. For additional information, please visit the VAR webpage:

<https://www.austintexas.gov/page/visual-artist-residency>

Resident Artist: 3 | **District 9**



Visual Artist in Residence Chelsea Biggerstaff in the Dougherty Arts Center clay studio creating ceramic artwork.

“Pieces Coming Together” Exhibit: A new exhibit entitled “Pieces Coming Together” opened at the Old Bakery & Emporium on September 21st, showcasing the work of members of the Austin Mosaic Guild (AMG). Founded in 2008, AMG promotes both traditional and contemporary mosaics, while fostering skill development and creativity among its members, from seasoned professionals with many years of experience to members who are just beginning their mosaic journey. Anticipated Attendees: 80 | **District 9** <https://oldbakeryandemporium.ticketleap.com/pieces-coming-together/>

Historic Tourism Updates

Pat Crow Memorial Plaza at Old Bakery: An informal open house will be held on October 11th to celebrate the installation of a memorial plaque honoring Pat Crow. A prolific campaign manager in Austin, Crow played a pivotal role in several significant victories that have shaped the city. Her notable achievements include the Save Our Springs Initiative in 1992, the creation of the Travis County Hospital District in 2004, and the city smoking ban in 2005. In recognition of her contributions, the exterior courtyard was named in her honor in 2018. **District 9**



*Pat Crow managing Gus Garcia's 1997 campaign for City Council.
(Photo by Alan Pogue)*

Align Programs with Community Interest

- Community Engagement Events
- Programs and Events



Program Updates

“Creature Project”: This year George Morales Dove Springs actively participated in the “Creature Project” along with five other sites within the Community Recreation Division. Participants had the opportunity to create their own creature drawings and 46 professional artists from across the world re-created the drawings. The resulting artwork were compiled into a single art book, with each participant receiving a personal copy. To celebrate this initiative, Dove Springs hosted an Art Exhibit on August 22nd from 5:30-7:30 p.m., allowing participants to showcase their artwork to parents and community visitors. Participants: 148 | **District 2**



Youth summer camp participant showing off her artwork at the Art Exhibit.



Tai Chi Gentle Strength Program: Montopolis Recreation and Community Center offers a Tai Chi Gentle Strength Program, a distinctive class that incorporates Tai Chi movements with light resistance. This program is beneficial for improving bone density, tendon strength, and core stability, which contributes to improved balance. Participants learn to utilize punching bags, elastic resistance bands, and light weights for resistance training. Classes are scheduled for Wednesdays from 10-11 a.m. in the Weight Room of the Montopolis Recreation and Community Center.

District 3

Varsity Generation Participants in Tai Chi Gentle Strength Program.

Pickfair Activity Center: Pickfair Activity Center offers a Varsity Generation program weekly from Tuesday to Friday. Each morning begins at 9 a.m. with coffee and tea, followed by a variety of engaging activities including ping pong, yoga, Rummikub, tai chi, and meditation. The program has 5-10 participants each day.

District 6

Art Mingle: Northwest Recreation Center is hosting an adult art class called Art Mingle, which will meet bi-monthly beginning September 11th. This class provides an opportunity for participants to connect and collaborate with fellow artists while working on their projects. Each session will be limited to 10 participants. **District 7**

Nature Poster Series: The Health Promotions Unit launched a new poster series earlier this year to highlight the benefits of spending time outdoors, aiming to educate both staff and the public. Each poster focuses on a specific benefit of nature. Recently, staff at Dell Seton Medical Center discovered the posters at Shipe Neighborhood Pool and reached out to request copies for their clinic office. Be on the lookout for the next installation of the campaign in October! **Districts 1-10**



Nature Poster Series

Adaptive Softball Special Olympics Texas Area Tournament: On September 7th, McBeth Recreation Center Adaptive Softball competed in the Special Olympics Texas Area 20 and 13 tournament at Kreig Field, with both teams winning gold. The coach pitch team tied the game in the final moments with multiple home runs, securing victory against the Marbridge Longhorns. The traditional team faced tough competition from two unified teams from San Antonio but showed great sportsmanship and effort. Approximately 150 people were in attendance, including athletes, coaches, volunteers, and spectators. **District 8**



McBeth Adaptive Softball Traditional Team

Austin Senior Golf Tournament: GolfATX hosted the Austin Senior Golf Tournament on September 14-15th, crowned the Champion Golfer aged 50 and above from the Greater Austin area. Established in 1997, the annual event features around 125 golfers at the Roy Kizer Golf Course. **District 2**

Golf Staff Saves Life of Golfer: A golfer was struck by lightning at Jimmy Clay/Roy Kizer Golf Course while putting on the 18th green. PARD staff members provided emergency life-saving assistance by using an Automated External Defibrillator and CPR to revive the victim. Staff members were recognized by PARD Occupational Safety Manager, John Hollenbeck, with gold-level safety recognition challenge coins.

Austin City Limits (ACL) Music Festival - Zilker Park:

- September 23rd - October 20th: Load In through Load Out, Zilker Great Lawn closed.
- October 4th - 6th - Weekend 1 + October 11th - 13th - Weekend 2: Annual Special Event hosting 75,000 per day. Significant traffic and pedestrian impacts are associated with this event.

Optimize and Improve Efficiency of Operations



Maintenance Update

Barton Springs Pool Repairs: Barton Springs Pool reopened to the public on September 19th, following quick action to repair two holes that formed in an abandoned skimmer pipe and created a safety hazard. PARD collaborated with Austin Water, and Watershed Protection on the repairs. PARD staff utilized the downtime to address several deferred maintenance projects, including routine tree trimming for safety and tree health, applying grass sod to bare areas, painting depth markers and safety signs on the pool deck, and thoroughly cleaning algae from the shallow end of the pool. **District 8**



Holes in abandoned skimmer pipe prior to temporary repairs.

Delores Duffie Recreation Center: The Rosewood Neighborhood Park’s irrigation project is almost complete, following weeks of trenching and minor delays. The new irrigation system, along with recent fencing and LED lighting installations, aims to enhance park amenities and improve maintenance of the ballfield. **District 1**

Contractors trench the ballfield at Rosewood Park prior to laying new irrigation lines.



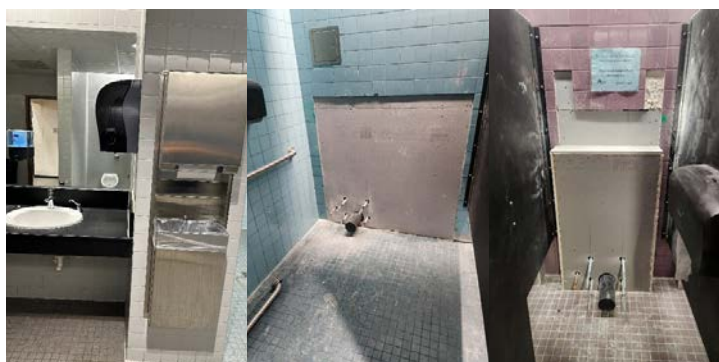
Virginia L. Brown Recreation Center Kitchen Upgrade Project: The kitchen space at Virginia L. Brown Recreation Center is set to undergo a significant renovation. New appliances and cabinetry have been purchased, with demolition expected to begin in September 2024. Anticipated Completion Date: October 31st | **District 4**



Left: Kitchen prior to remodeling; Right: Kitchen expected look after completed remodel

Gus Garcia Recreation Center Bathroom Improvements:

- Gymnasium Bathrooms: Ongoing ADA compliance enhancements include replacing paper towel dispensers for better accessibility for the ADA community.
- Lobby Bathroom: ADA upgrades nearing completion with the installation of toilets and urinals, and modified stalls to enhance community accessibility. **District 4**



From left to right: Gymnasium bathrooms with new paper towel dispensers and lobby bathrooms with modified stalls.