



20 | IMPACT  
24 | REPORT

# AUSTIN PARKS FOUNDATION





DEAR FRIENDS,

For more than 30 years, Austin Parks Foundation has been working to make our parks and green spaces better and more accessible for all. Over those years, we’ve had the good fortune to be joined by some incredible supporters (that’s you!). Without you – our mission isn’t possible: *You make this work happen.*

2024 was an incredible year at APF. Here are just a few of the highlights we’ve celebrated in the past year, thanks to your support:

- After years of hard work, **we officially opened the Zilker Eagle Mini Train** on June 12, 2024. Since then, tens of thousands of riders have flocked to Zilker Park to ride the train, some from as far away as Russia and Germany!
- We continued to plan for **our largest project to date: an All Abilities Playground** to be built at Onion Creek Metro Park. In 2024 our team hosted three virtual community meetings and 12 focus groups with the disability community to gather feedback, and **in December, we unveiled the preliminary designs.**
- **We cut the ribbon on our third PlayATX project**, made possible by APF and Spurs Give. We’re looking forward to working on additional projects in the coming months!
- We continued to make good on our \$2M commitment to match the City of Austin’s funds to provide manmade and natural shade – with **shade structures added at Earl J. Pomerleau Pocket Park and Oertli Neighborhood Park.**
- **We hosted thousands of park-goers** for our FREE In the Park Series, which features Playdates, Fitness, Art, and Movies in the Park. We’re gearing up to introduce another offering – Hoops in the Park – in the coming weeks, so stay tuned for more!
- Our team spent the year working on a number of park improvement projects, including Scenic Brook Pocket Park, Grand Meadow Neighborhood Park and Little Walnut Creek Greenbelt.
- Just in time for the sweltering summer months, we worked with PARD to provide **more than \$200,000 to fund necessary repairs and install lighting upgrades** at the city’s beloved Deep Eddy Pool.
- And of course, we introduced our brand new APF mascot, Hippie the Hummingbird!

We’re starting this new year refreshed and reenergized, ready to do even more in 2025 – and we hope you’ll join us for the fun! Together, we can make our parks and green spaces safer, more accessible and better for all.

With Gratitude,  
 Colin Wallis  
CEO, Austin Parks Foundation

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Luke Ellis - Board Chair	Monica Fernandes	Leticia Mendoza
Rashed Islam - Past Chair	Bobby Garza	Jennifer Mueller
Robyn Lewis - Treasurer	Bobbi Kommineni	Patty Steinwedell
Cory Laurel - Secretary	Monica Lopez Magee	Laura Villagran Johnson
Bryan Barksdale	Ian McAbeer	Bob Wynn
Zeina El-Azzi	Nikelle Meade	

ADVOCACY

Austin’s parks consistently face critical funding shortfalls - holding them back from being the best that they can be. APF’s commitment to advocacy is critical to improving the health of our parks system. We partner with dedicated park lovers around Austin to inform and encourage pro-parks legislation on state and local levels.

Thanks to our efforts, Austin City Council voted in favor of a FY25 Budget that includes several big wins for our parks and green spaces:

- Securing **\$1.2 Million in funding** for **16 new full-time** Parks and Recreation maintenance employees.
- Repurposing **4 full-time** positions to the Parks and Recreation Department’s Homeless Encampment Response Team.
- Securing **\$730,000 to fund** equipment for lawn mowing and other parks maintenance services.
- Establishing **\$50 Million in one-time land acquisition funds** for parkland and other purposes.

& VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteerism is at the heart of our mission - providing opportunities for personal growth, community building and fostering a sense of pride and ownership between volunteers and their local parks. 2024 was a banner year for this program, bringing thousands of volunteers into our parks to work on dozens of improvement projects! Our corporate partners joined the fun this year, hosting a total of 22 corporate workdays from local businesses like AMD, Tito’s and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.



12,115  
VOLUNTEERS  
ENGAGED



36,345  
WORK HOURS  
COMPLETED



284  
PARK  
PROJECTS



136  
PARKS ACROSS  
AUSTIN



# ACL FESTIVAL GRANTS

The Austin City Limits Music Festival remains one of APF’s greatest funding partners, with more than \$65 million invested back into our parks over the last 19 years. These funds are allocated to support community-initiated park renovations and improvements across Austin’s nearly 400 parks through our ACL Festival Grants program. Improvements span projects large and small - from installation of signage to planning and design of new amenities.

## Awarded in 2024:

**Rosewood BDHS - \$4,000**

District 1, 78702  
L.D. Washington Wall of Honor

**Dottie Jordan Neighborhood Park - \$6,082**

District 1, 78723  
Tennis court renovations for free youth tennis lessons

**Onion Creek Greenbelt - \$4,870**

District 2, 78744  
Limestone seating in dog park

**Grand Meadow Neighborhood Park - \$42,000**

District 2, 78747  
Community garden fence and amenities

**Roy G. Guerrero Colorado Metropolitan Park - \$550,000**

District 3, 78741  
Basketball court and shade structure

**Ron Rigsby Pocket Park - \$26,500**

District 4, 78758  
Three nature play projects

**Walnut Bluff Trailhead - \$26,500**

District 7, 78753  
Three nature play projects

**Heritage Oaks Neighborhood Park - \$26,500**

District 9, 78741  
Three nature play projects



# ACL FESTIVAL GRANTS

## Completed in 2024:

**Festival Beach Community Garden - \$4,856**

District 1, 78723  
Development of a site plan

**Pastor Edward Clarence Craig Jr. Neighborhood Park - \$29,000**

District 2, 78744  
Informational kiosk

**Armadillo Neighborhood Park - \$10,000**

District 2, 78745  
Removal of invasive species and trees

**Parque Zaragoza - \$6,000**

District 3, 78702  
Native trees and irrigation for the playground

**Georgian Acres Neighborhood Park - \$800**

District 4, 78753  
Little Free Library

**PEAS Farm at Cunningham School Park - \$5,000**

District 5, 78745  
Garden improvements

**Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park - \$2,500**

District 7, 78753  
Mulch, tree care and soil stabilization

**UMLAUF Sculpture Garden and Museum - \$25,000**

District 8, 78704  
Preservation, Expansion and Unification Plan

**Steck Valley Greenbelt - \$17,000**

District 10, 78759  
Trail improvements



## COMMUNITY INITIATED DESIGN SERVICES

**Agave Neighborhood Park (Completed July, 2024)**

District 1, 78724  
Detailed park design, creating a schematic plan and cost estimate for nature play and trail connectivity

## COMMUNITY INITIATED DESIGN SERVICES

**Jamestown Neighborhood Park (Completed October, 2024)**

District 4, 78758  
Overall park planning, including community engagement and design, for approximately 3.5 acres of undeveloped parkland



# PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- Oertli Neighborhood Park - \$95,342.26**  
*District 1, 78753*  
New pavilions
- Alamo Pocket Park - \$128,348**  
*District 1, 78722*  
Playground equipment, safety surfacing and limestone blocks
- Pan American Neighborhood Park - \$248,710**  
*District 3, 78702*  
Ball field lighting replacement and electrical
- Zilker Metropolitan Park - \$147,943**  
*District 8, 78746*  
Stage repairs for the Zilker Hillside Theater
- Deep Eddy Pool \$206,734**  
*District 10, 78703*  
Wall repair and lighting installation
- Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park - \$136,850**  
*District 7, 78753*  
Basketball court improvements in partnership with the San Antonio Spurs, including lighting, electrical, court resurfacing and goal replacement
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## IT'S MY PARK DAY 2024

We celebrated another year of It's My Park Day, our biannual, community-wide volunteer event that broke records in 2024, hosting **190 park projects** and **more than 6,000 volunteers!**

Our 2024 events generated nearly **\$650,000 in total labor value** (equal to eight full-time PARD maintenance staff), with **more than 20,000 hours logged**, **1,529 cubic yards of mulch spread** and **76,750 pounds of trash collected** between the two dates!

# PROGRAMMING



Our commitment to Austin spans further than just our work supporting and improving parks to other community building opportunities with local and national organizations. APF was proud to provide support to some Austin institutions through ACL-funded sponsorships this year, including:

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| • Austin PRIDE Festival                 | • KUTX Rock the Park Concert Series |
| • Austin Sunshine Camps                 | • Las Piñatas at Dia de los Muertos |
| • Austin Symphony's 4th of July Concert | • Trail of Lights                   |
| • Central Texas Juneteenth Festival     | • TreeFolks                         |
| • Forklift Dance Festival               | • Zilker Hillside Theater           |
| • Greater & Greener Conference          | • Zilker Kite Festival              |

## IN THE PARK SERIES

This year, **we hosted 32 In the Park Series events** in parks across all ten council districts. These free community events **welcomed more than 3,200 attendees** who joined us for Playdates in the Park, Movies in the Park, Fitness in the Park and the introduction of our brand-new Art in the Park events in 2024. We also celebrated a special summer Movie in the Park with a showing of *Jaws* on the water at the newly updated Deep Eddy Pool.



## THE PARKS SUMMIT

2024 also brought the return of The Parks Summit - our free event in partnership with Austin Parks and Recreation Department aimed at Park Adopters, Stewards, greenspace advocates and volunteers across Austin. **The first in-person Parks Summit since 2019** brought together park lovers to connect with one another and learn from local park leaders. **This year's event hosted 81 attendees** for sessions on the importance of community, authentic and culturally relevant neighborhood engagement, ecological restoration, the Adopt-A-Park program, tips for activating your local parks, park advocacy and a deep dive into some of Austin's park history.



# THE ZILKER EAGLE

In 2019, APF recognized the importance of a beloved Austin landmark that had fallen into disrepair: the Zilker Park miniature train. And so, we took on the challenge of restoring this iconic piece of Austin's history for generations to enjoy once again. The path to reopening the train wasn't an easy one - we faced a number of hurdles along the way - but the tracks were repaired, the locomotive got a fresh new look and then, on APF's 32nd birthday, the brand new Zilker Eagle took flight on its maiden voyage. Since then, riders from all over the world have come to make memories on the train (some from as far as Russia, Germany and India)! Thanks to our friends at the Bill Wood Foundation, we're able to hold monthly free Community Hours to help make train rides accessible for all Austinites!



**6/12/24**  
**THE ZILKER EAGLE OPENS**

72,601  
TOTAL RIDERS IN 2024

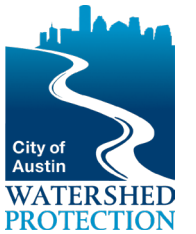


**1,762  
FREE RIDES  
PROVIDED DURING  
COMMUNITY HOURS**



## SPONSORS

Austin Parks Foundation invests 80 cents of every dollar donated directly back into programming in parks across Austin! Thank you to our 2024 sponsors, individual donors, Groundbreakers, Perennial Partners and supporters for investing in a healthier, more vibrant and safer outdoor spaces for *all Austinites*.



GoodPop

## Planet Dental

## Sportskind

## Kinser Ranch

QuikPrint

## Texas Rowing Center

## Limestone Hills Orthodontics

## ZILKER EAGLE SPONSORS



Austin American-Statesman

**Carolyn, Jack, Adam  
and Carlen Long**



**The Yonge  
Foundation**



## CONNECT WITH US

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Follow us on social media, subscribe to our email newsletter or visit our website to get involved in your local parks.

@AUSTINPARKSFDN



**AUSTIN PARKS  
FOUNDATION**

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