



Kids are all smiles while enjoying the new playscape at Lang-Carson Park in Atlanta, completed with support from a Park Pride Legacy Grant. June, 2021.



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great parks for all

Atlanta Needs a Greenspace Mayor

Park Pride believes that everyone deserves access not just to a park, but a *quality* park. To make this vision a reality, Atlanta requires the leadership of a Greenspace Mayor.

Atlantans voted for the city's 61st Mayor on November 2. As of the writing of this newsletter, we don't yet know who will assume that role. What we do know, however, is that to be successful, Atlanta's leading executive will need to step up to the current environmental challenges of our rapidly growing community.

Accessible and wonderful greenspace is necessary to maintain and enhance the quality of life for all who live in our city and those who will move here in the future. There are three key areas on which the 61st Mayor will need to focus her or his attention to bring quality greenspace within walking distance of home for all:

1. The prioritization and preservation of trees and nature,
2. A greater commitment to park maintenance in the city budget (the Department of Parks and Recreation currently comprises less than 2% of the overall city budget), and
3. Planning for the acquisition of more land for parks and urban forests to meet the needs of a growing population.

The time is *now* for a Greenspace Mayor. Atlanta *will* grow. While there is debate about how many people will move into the city over the next two decades, rest assured that it will be enough to make a significant impact on the way we live our lives. At that time, we'll need parks, trails, and natural areas like we've never needed them before. We'll need them to recreate, as greenways connecting our neighborhoods, as green infrastructure to strengthen climate resiliency, and (of course!) as outdoor oases during future public health crises.

While there is still the opportunity, we must secure the greenspace, the urban forests, and nature for people and families to enjoy far into the future. Once land is developed, there is no bringing it back.

Park Pride looks forward to working in collaboration with Atlanta's Greenspace Mayor, with her or his administration, and with our greenspace partners to ensure access to quality greenspace now and for generations to come.



Engage with Park Pride's advocacy efforts: parkpride.org/advocacy.

A Vision for a Future Park

Parks are treasured neighborhood amenities where children can play safely, friendships start, and memories are formed. Parks are all about community! That's why community leadership is so important when designing new parks, and why Park Pride's "visioning process" builds a shared vision for a neighborhood greenspace based on the ideas and concerns of the whole community.



In 2020, the City of Atlanta purchased one acre of land in the South River Gardens community in Southeast Atlanta to become a public park. Through neighborhood meetings, surveys, and engagement, Park Pride's professional park designers worked closely with neighborhood residents and the community association over the summer of 2021 to produce a conceptual plan for this new greenspace!

The community will now use the completed park visioning plan to guide the development of this greenspace and inform future investments, working side-by-side with the Department of Parks and Recreation and Park Pride. We look forward to seeing the dreams for this greenspace become a reality!



See the final conceptual vision for the new park in the South River Gardens neighborhood: parkpride.org/southerngardens.

Celebrating New Park Amenities



"It's a great day to be in a park!" Those words, spoken by City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner, John Dargle, kicked off a late September ribbon cutting at Melvin Drive Park in Southwest Atlanta. Together with Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, Councilmember Overstreet, the Department of

Parks and Recreation, and The Home Depot Foundation, Park Pride and the community celebrated the completion of a new pavilion and walking trail.

These amenities will make the park more "user friendly" for visitors, offering a shady location to enjoy lunch and the opportunity for a stroll through the park's wooded area for those looking to exercise. Both projects were the result of a community-driven fundraising effort—led by the Friends of Melvin Drive Park—and included two Park Pride Community Building Grants (generously funded by The Home Depot Foundation).

Thank you, Friends of Melvin Drive Park, for all you do for your community!



View photos and a video of the event and new amenities online: parkpride.org/melvindrive.

Message from Michael: Beyond Parks



Michael Halicki
Park Pride's
Executive Director

Park Pride's vision is an Atlanta where every neighborhood has access to a great park.

At Park Pride's Roundtable, *Beyond Parks: Pushing Past Park Boundaries to Make Atlanta a More Livable City*, we examined the connections between parks, affordable housing, regionalism, and active transportation.

Moderated by journalist Maria Saporta, local leaders provided reflections on addressing the intersection of these issues:

- "First, we have to have land. There are a lot of places that are abandoned, and there's an opportunity to recover those lands and—as development occurs—have land for affordable housing and for parks." Lisa Gordon, President and CEO of Atlanta Habitat for Humanity
- "If we want to make trails and blueways real and really connected, we have to think in multijurisdictional terms and without political boundaries." Doug Hooker, Executive Director of the Atlanta Regional Commission
- "It's key that we have streets that allow us to access our parks safely and easily." Rebecca Serna, Executive Director of the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition

The message is clear: *collaboration is key to achieving Park Pride's vision for greenspace and positively impacting Atlanta's livability beyond parks.*



Never miss a Roundtable. Email rachel@parkpride.org to receive event notifications.

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Delta Airline's Fleet team gives back with an afternoon of volunteer service cleaning up the Atlanta BeltLine Westside Trail. October, 2021.

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Great parks are powerful.

They improve our health, mental well-being, and combat feelings of social isolation. They create habitats for wildlife, capture stormwater runoff that would otherwise flood surrounding streets and homes, and make our city cooler. Great parks transform *neighborhoods* into *communities*.

Together, we can ensure everyone has access to a great park.

Make your gift today: parkpride.org/donate

