

Volunteers at the Urban Food Forest at Browns Mill plant newly constructed raised beds—funded by a Park Pride grant—which will serve to both nourish and nurture the surrounding community.



park views

PARKPRIDE.ORG | SUMMER 2022

great parks for all

Park Pride's 2022 Grant Cycle Makes History

This spring, Park Pride announced its largest grant cycle in history: \$2.3 million for capital improvements to local parks!

Established in 2004, Park Pride's Grantmaking Program awards funding to community groups seeking to revitalize their neighborhood greenspaces. It is designed to support Friends of the Park groups taking on larger projects as they grow and develop capacity, offering awards from \$250 to \$100,000 or more.

The Grantmaking Program is special. Because project proposals are community-driven and supported, the park improvements funded are guaranteed to meet the community's unique needs. Park Pride has awarded over \$12.7 million through this program to date, funding projects that include new playgrounds, bridges, ADA-accessibility upgrades, kiosks and signs, trails, exercise equipment, community gardens, green infrastructure (such as rain gardens), art installations, and much more. Our bottom-up approach responds directly to residents' hopes and desires for their neighborhood park.

Beyond its size, what makes this year's slate of grant awards noteworthy is its emphasis on equity—60% of the allocated

funds will benefit parks in low-income communities, building upon Park Pride's efforts to make great parks a reality in every neighborhood.

The Grantmaking Program is generously supported by the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation, The Home Depot Foundation, the City of Atlanta, and others.

The City became the program's most recent funder in late 2021 through legislation adopted unanimously by Atlanta City Council. Mayor Andre Dickens, too, shares Park Pride's commitment to a vision of an Atlanta where every community has access to a great park. "Every neighborhood in our city deserves access to quality greenspace, regardless of income or zip code. With this historic slate of grant awards from Park Pride, we will make progress on that goal," he said. "I believe our parks have the ability to establish community connections and the power to shape and define the character of our neighborhoods. I am honored to continue building our strong partnership with Park Pride."

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ENGAGING COMMUNITIES TO ACTIVATE THE POWER OF PARKS

The list of award recipients and the projects funded through this grant cycle are shared below. We look forward to enjoying all the improvements and new amenities coming to parks across the city!

2022 Grant Awards

Friends of **Adair Park** will replace the aging playground equipment with a new central play structure.

Friends of **Atlanta Memorial Park** Conservancy will create a series of nature-based education sites along the park's streambank.

Friends of **Beaverbrook Park** look forward to new signage and trail improvements, including a bridge that will provide an important connection through the park.

Friends of **Candler Park** Conservancy will install a new playground sure to become the centerpiece of the neighborhood.

Friends of **Center Hill Park** look forward to trails and a bridge that will enhance connection through the park.

Friends of **Central Park** will address damaging erosion at the fitness area by adding a rubberized surface.

Friends of **Chastain Memorial Park** Conservancy and park visitors will benefit from trail improvements in the North Woods section of the park that include interpretive signs, native plantings, and a new pavilion.

Friends of **Cleopas Johnson Park** will upgrade park amenities, improving park access and safety.

Friends of **DeKalb Memorial Park** will replace the playground with new equipment for a range of ages.

Friends of **Grant Park** Conservancy will beautify the Erskine Fountain with a cobblestone plaza and native plantings.

Friends of **Herbert Taylor and Daniel Johnson Parks** will improve trail access by stabilizing the stream crossing.

Friends of **Historic Fourth Ward Park** Conservancy will install more sustainable landscaping by removing invasive plants and adding native species.

Historic Oakland Foundation will add benches, bike racks, and directional signage to **Oakland Cemetery**, enhancing the visitor experience.

Friends of **Lang-Carson Park** will improve flow through the space with accessible pathways and beautification to the entrance.

Friends of **Lenox-Wildwood Park** will construct a natural pathway and add a bridge across a creek.



All smiles from a family enjoying a morning at the newly renovated Freedom Barkway in the Old Fourth Ward during a ribbon-cutting celebration in May! The dog park's renovation was supported by \$104,000 in grants from Park Pride.

Friends of **Lindsay Street Park** will add a bridge that connects the two sections of the park.

Friends of **Lillian Cooper Shepherd Park** will install a cover over the basketball court, creating a great space for both games and community gatherings.

Friends of **Melvin Drive Park** will install a new playground for both toddlers and older children to enjoy.

Friends of **Peace Park** will revitalize the playground with a climbing structure and new swings.

Friends of **Sara J. González Park** will increase the usability of their soccer pitch with the installation of an AstroTurf field.

Friends of South Atlanta Parks will improve walking paths through **Lucius D. Simon Memorial Park** to create safe routes for school children and add a more welcoming entrance with seating and pathways.

Olmsted Linear Park Alliance will replace playground equipment at **Springdale Park** with those designed for kids of all abilities and improve drainage around the playground area.

Friends of **Zonolite Park** will upgrade a natural trail to a raised slate chip path (increasing accessibility for people of all ages and mobilities) and install native trees and shrubs.



Learn more about Park Pride's Grantmaking Program: parkpride.org/grants.

message from michael: Lessons from a Grant Cycle



Michael Halicki
Park Pride's Executive
Director

This year's grant cycle is different than those previous. The most

obvious difference being the size: \$2.3 million in grants were awarded, a number that exceeds 2021's awards by nearly \$1 million!

Another is the lessons we've learned, the two most prominent being the following:

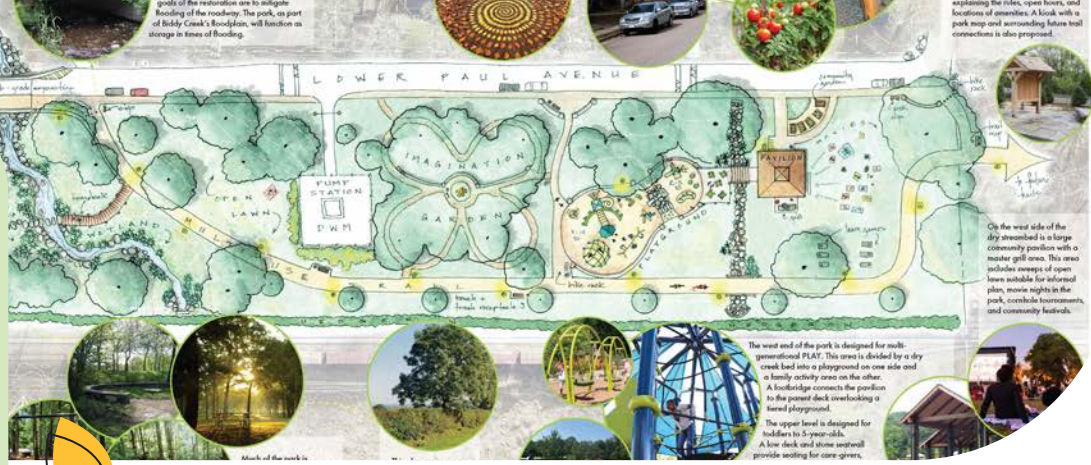
1. There is more demand for community-led park improvements than we knew. Following the changes made to increase access to our Grantmaking Program in 2020, 10 new Friends of the Park groups quickly formed in low-income neighborhoods. The speed of their formation alludes to the urgent desire for quality parks.
2. The widespread desire for quality parks exceeds Park Pride's capacity to meet it. Addressing the pervasive lack of funding across the park system requires a collaborative effort with both public and private support. Only then will achieving great parks in every neighborhood become possible.

Park Pride will continue to increase access to our programs to meet Atlanta's park needs.

This is just the beginning.

Stay engaged for big things to come as we pursue the vision of bringing access to a great park to every neighborhood!

**Follow us on social media
for ways to engage:
@parkpride.**



Above: The conceptual plan for the new park on Lower Paul Avenue.
Learn more at: lowerpaulpark.wixsite.com/visioning

Connection to the Chattahoochee

Atlanta's relationship with the Chattahoochee is multifaceted. Historically a corridor of trade between the Cherokee and Muscogee people, the river was given over to industry after colonization. Today, the Chattahoochee provides water to Atlanta's growing population and native wildlife, countless opportunities for recreation, and an unparalleled respite from the fast pace of city life.

Despite these overlapping layers of natural, cultural, and historical meaning, City of Atlanta residents have had *no* direct access to the river via public parks or trails, nor to the health and wellness benefits that such amenities provide. Only recently is that beginning to change thanks to a collaborative effort between Park Pride, the community, partner nonprofits, and local government.

Park Pride Invests in a Transformative Vision

Riverwalk Atlanta is a vision for a five-mile system of trails and parks that provides the first direct access to the Chattahoochee in the City of Atlanta. Keith Sharp, a local community leader, had been advocating for its implementation for decades when, in 2014, he finally established a foothold through a \$100,000 Park Pride grant to purchase two flood-prone properties in the Riverside neighborhood (with acquisition support from The Conservation Fund). This initial investment attracted public funding to purchase *more* land, thus establishing the foundation for the first park of the Riverwalk Atlanta concept!

A Conceptual Park Plan Emerges

Park Pride's commitment to this project did not stop with the initial investment. Throughout 2021 and into 2022, Park Pride's team of landscape architects worked with community and municipal partners to create a conceptual plan for this new, nine-acre park (referred to as the "Lower Paul Ave Park") through our Park Visioning Program. After a six-month process of civic engagement, we published a community-supported vision plan which will be used as a fundraising tool and guide for the park's buildout.

Public parks are not born out of isolation; they require the collaboration of multiple partners. Only by working together will we be able to achieve our vision for a healthier, greener, and more connected Atlanta where every neighborhood has access to a quality park. We look forward to continued collaboration with our partners to bring Riverwalk Atlanta to life!

The PARKS WE NEED NOW

The 21st annual Parks & Greenspace Conference explored new strategies and actions to create the parks and park systems that communities need in response to the rapidly changing dynamics of our cities. Local and national thought leaders challenged us to expand our ideas about equity and access to parks and public spaces, shared insights into the research linking parks to health outcomes, and invoked the power of parks to achieve a more united, supportive, and connected community for people of all ages and abilities.

Big Ideas from Keynote Speakers



Neelay Bhatt, Principal at PROS Consulting, Inc.

“A wise man said: survival of who we are as a species isn't based on whether you're the most intelligent, the strongest, or the fastest, but rather on who is the most willing and adaptable to change. Change is coming whether you want it or not. You've got two choices: you can be forced to change, or you can be the force for change.”



Norma E. García-González, Director of LA County Parks and Recreation

“Developing [LA County's plan for park equity] was a courageous process. We had to talk about race. We had to talk about the disinvestment that happened for decades. And we needed to come together to develop solutions to address it.”



Akiima Price, Co-founder of Friends of Anacostia Park

“When we think about park users, we think about people with their dog or skipping. But we don't think about the real-life situations of the people who are using our parks. You've got all kinds of people who qualify as 'park users' [homeless, LGBTQ, crime victims, stressed, poor, people of color, trans]. So, when you think about park users as stakeholders, you need to think about these people, too.”



Meghan Talarowski, Executive Director of Studio Ludo

“[Play] is the essence of our humanity, and it's not just for some of us, but for all of us. It is the right of every child. As the early 'child savers' knew, childhood is a precious time of growth and development that must be protected. Play belongs to us all. It makes us our best selves.”

Park Pride's 2022 Inspiration Award Winners



Rene Iverson

As President of the Board for the **Little Creek Farm Conservancy** in DeKalb County, Rene inspires visitors to overcome their fears, try something new, and to share in her passion for this unique park.

Steve Peters

Steve, President of the **Parks and Recreation Coalition of Brookhaven**, is a natural 'bridge builder' and 'the glue' that ties all efforts to improve Brookhaven parks together.

Margo Reynolds

Margo is the chair of maintenance with the **Friends of Briarlake Forest Park** in DeKalb County. She is methodical in her approach to park maintenance and cares for the park as if it were her own.

Carrie Salvary

Carrie chairs the **Alliance for the Activation of Cook Park** in Atlanta. She is fiercely committed to her community, to addressing past injustices, and to empowering those who historically have not had a seat at the table.

Camilla Warren

Camilla celebrates retirement from 36 years at the **EPA**. During that time, she supported the cleanup efforts of over 300 properties through the Brownfields Program.

Winfrey Young

As the leader of the **Friends of Pittman Park**, Winfrey is credited with bringing people back to the park and making it a space of community gathering for all ages and all abilities.

Thank You, Conference Sponsors!

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Organizational Updates

board of directors news



Kristy Rachal, Assistant to the Executive Vice President of External Affairs and Nuclear Development at Georgia Power, was elected as board chair.

Park Pride welcomes three new board members:



Abraxas Abrams-Pickens of NOTLA Management & Consulting



Alex Brown of Alston & Bird LLP



Dontá Council of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

staff news



Rhys Havens joined staff as the Corporate Relations and Individual Giving Manager.



Brooke Freeman is supporting the Park Visioning team as a Summer Intern.



Noor Jaleel is a Summer Intern with the Community Building team.



Rachel Maher has been promoted to Dir. of Communications & Policy.



Project Manager **Ruth Pimentel** and her husband welcomed a new baby this spring!

Visit parkpride.org/team for staff contact information.

project updates from around town

Great Parks for All!

Sidney Marcus Park

On a Friday in late April, a celebration was underway at Sidney Marcus Park in the Morningside neighborhood of Atlanta. Kids raced around the sidewalk and got their faces painted, parents sung along to live music, and neighbors gathered in seemingly every square foot of the playground area.

The reason for this festive occasion was the completion of several new park amenities—funded in part by a \$100,000 grant from Park Pride—that included a walking path, an additional entrance to improve accessibility, and bioswales and drainage infrastructure to mitigate unsightly and damaging erosion in the park.

The Morningside community looks forward to many more such gatherings in their refreshed neighborhood greenspace!



A.D. Williams Park

For years, the Friends of A.D. Williams Park in the Northwest Atlanta neighborhood of Brookview Heights has been dedicated to creating a safe place for neighborhood kids to play, relax, and spend time in nature. They are pursuing this vision through a variety of partnerships, and Park Pride had the privilege to support their efforts through a \$75,000 grant for playground improvements.

In April, Executive Director, Michael Halicki, joined Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens, City of Atlanta officials, and community leaders in a ribbon cutting ceremony for the playground and other improvements that highlighted history, progress, and collaboration to make a positive difference for kids and communities. We are excited to see the impactful efforts of this Friends group continue and proud to support their progress!





Park Pride and the Friends of Whittier Mill Park welcomed over 70 employees and interns from The Home Depot for a volunteer project in June that helped to restore forest health in this Northwest Atlanta greenspace.

Digging In for the Greener Good

Local businesses and corporations support Park Pride's mission year-round, making a big impact on Atlanta's local parks. Corporate groups can tap into team building opportunities such as custom, private volunteer projects to address urgent park needs while supercharging employee engagement. This summer, many of our corporate partners have dug in for the greener good across the city! Shoutout to a long-time supporter, The Home Depot Foundation, as well as one of our newest supporters, Truist, for giving back to local communities and parks.

The Home Depot Foundation at Whittier Mill Park



Team Depot volunteers supported efforts to restore the ecological health of the forest.



Volunteering with Park Pride is an excellent team building opportunity!

Truist at Kathryn Johnston Memorial Park



Truist's summer analysts and associates from across the country got to know each other at this volunteer event.



Volunteers improved the effectiveness of the bioswales by clearing weeds and overgrowth.



To learn more about becoming a corporate partner or to plan a custom volunteer experience for your corporate group, contact Rhys Havens, Corporate Relations Manager: rhys@parkpride.org.

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Please reach out to Rhys Havens,
Corporate Relations Manager, to learn more.
rhys@parkpride.org or (770) 284.6135.

Old Fourth Ward residents
enjoy the newly renovated
Freedom Barkway, made
possible by a Park Pride grant.



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Mission

To engage communities to
activate the power of parks.

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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

