RECREATION & PARKS FOR ALL

ACTIVATE ATL

Comprehensive Parks + Recreation Master Plan

CDHS Committee

November 30, 2021

ONE ATLANTA | ATL PARKS & REC

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October 2021

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Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

MAYOR KEISHA LANCE BOTTOMS

ATL PARKS & REC

Comprehensive parks and recreation system plan that provides recommendations for provision of facilities, programs and services; parkland acquisition and development; maintenance and operations; and administration and management over the next ten years.

Activate ATL Plan

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The Project Team

Project Advisors

Project Lead
+ Project Management
+ Parks Planning

Client

Parks + Recreation
Programming, Operations,
and Management

Public Engagement

Statistically Valid Survey

What is Activate ATL?

Our Approach

1 Existing Conditions Analyses

2 Needs + Priorities Assessment

3 Long-Range Vision

4 Implementation Strategy

5 Final Plan + Adoption

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- Project Coordination
- Existing + Proposed Plans
- Demographics
- Park System Conditions
- Existing Conditions Summary Document

- Qualitative Analysis
- Quantitative Analysis
- Anecdotal Analysis
- Needs + Priorities Summary Document

- Long-Range Vision Workshop
- Capital + O&M Costs
- Parks and Recreation Vision Summary Document

- Funding Alternatives
- Prioritization
- Implementation Strategy Summary Document

- Draft Final Master Plan
- Final Master Plan

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BY THE NUMBERS

10,000+
Atlantans engaged from across all zip codes

- 3,552 Survey Responses
- 16 Virtual Public Meetings
- 1,265 Virtual Public Meeting Attendees
- 6,608 Public Meeting Engagements
- 1,604 Mailing List Sign-Ups
- 57 Focus Groups
- 16 Community Member Videos
- 250 Lawn Signs in Parks
- 23,000 Postcards Mailed
- 100 Prize Winners

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Challenges: Maintaining Quality & Growth

- Access to parks and recreation

- Comfort and attractiveness of exterior and interior spaces

- Levels of use and mixes of things to do

- Ensuring sustainability

- Building wear and tear

- Increase in population

- Safety and violence prevention

- Funding

Survey Results

- *84% of respondents said that they had used a park or recreation facility in the last year. For comparison, the national average is just 77%.*

- *24% of respondents said that they were discouraged from using DPR amenities because they are not well maintained.*

- *When asked how they would spend $100 on parks and recreation, most money was spent on improving the existing system.*

- *90% of respondents were very supportive or somewhat supportive of improving, enhancing, upgrading, and renovating existing parks and outdoor recreation facilities to meet resident needs.*

- *Top priorities for investment of facilities - 1) paved multi-purpose trails, 2) unpaved walking and hiking trails, 3) natural areas, and 4) restrooms at parks.*

Survey Results

- *The high priority programs - 1) health/wellness programs, 2) movies in the park, 3) local food, 4) nature programs, 5) cooking and nutrition classes, and 6) learn to swim*

- *89% of respondents were very supportive or somewhat supportive of developing new trails, facilities, lighting, sidewalks, benches, and picnic shelters with connectivity between each other.*

- *The #1 preferred way of learning about programs, activities, and special events were emails and/or activity calendars.*

- *64% of respondents said they don't know what programs are being offered.*

- *59% of respondents selected that the top thing the Department could do to promote a healthier lifestyle would be to offer green markets to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables in parks and indoor recreation centers.*

Guiding Principles

- Provide plentiful and diverse experiences
- Ensure equitable and inclusive practices
- Cultivate stewardship
- Offer safe, equitable, and seamless access and connectivity
- Maximize awareness of the recreation and park system
- Optimize current use of facilities and services
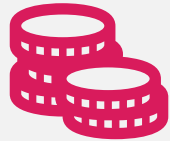- Foster partnerships
- Promote health and wellness
- Prioritize, monitor and evaluate investments

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- **INVEST** in Atlanta's Parks and Recreation Assets

- **CONNECT** to Atlanta's Parks and Recreation Resources

- **GROW** the Parks & Recreation System

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Strategic Action Items

Invest

- Examine Programming through **Health Equity Lens**
- Improve Conditions of Existing Facilities, **Reinventing Amenities**
- Create a **Vibrant, Welcoming, Safe** Environment
- Foster **Excellence in Daily Maintenance** of DPR Facilities

Connect

- **Prioritize Youth and Seniors** in Programming
- Focus Communication Strategies on **Partnering with Community**

Grow

- Provide Programs to Promote **Social, Generational, Cross-Cultural** Interaction
- Establish **Well-Defined Partnerships** through Equity Lens
- Increase Parks and Rec Staff, Safety, Programming to **Meet Increased Demand**
- Align Youth **Programming to Fill Gaps**

1. **Improve the condition of our existing facilities**, prioritizing locations based on identified needs.

2. **Foster excellence in daily maintenance** of parks and recreation facilities through investments in human capital, training, and equipment.

3. **Invest in programming opportunities** that include diverse interests such as senior athletics, cooking and gardening classes, teen music program, art programs and emerging sports, and high priority programs.

4. **Reimagine golf courses and tennis centers** as welcoming places and increase/improve opportunities for other uses.

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5. **Invest in employees and partners** to develop increased skills and customer service training to promote and encourage a career track based on continuous development, professionalism, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

6. **Invest in safety and security systems** at recreation centers and parks through multiple strategies, including reducing crime opportunities through environmental design.

7. **Invest in natural areas** in parks for the dual purposes of preserving and protecting Atlanta's abundant tree canopy and wildlife habitat while encouraging visitation for human respite and refuge

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1. **Foster a system-wide sustainable trail network** that guides user access to parks and enables connections across the city. Improve wayfinding between and within neighborhood parks and the regional parks and recreation system.

2. **Prioritize youth and seniors in programming** through ongoing research and embedding innovation in our culture and practices. Coordinate and collaborate with partners who offer unique services to youth, adults and seniors.

3. **Identify opportunities to develop environmental education programming opportunities across the city**. Utilize environmental education and as a vehicle for new users to be introduced to parks and recreation, and to inspire the next generation of park stewards through education and outreach.

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4. **Provide meaningful recurring and drop-in volunteer opportunities** for a variety of abilities - furthering the work of Park Pride and DPR and fostering connections between neighbors, generations, and parks and recreation.

5. **Develop robust communication strategies** to inform the wider community of parks and recreation resources and connect/partner with the community.

6. **Strategically align youth programming services to fill gaps in the city** and other partner agency offerings, and specifically develop teen programming to build pathways to keep youth from entering the criminal justice system.

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Grow

1. **Acquire park land** strategically through property donations, purchases, public/private partnerships, or similar means to ensure parks are available and accessible throughout the city - with a goal of providing a park within a 10-minute walk of the population now and in the future.

2. **Increase park land acreage** through partnerships with other city departments and governmental agencies such as the Department of Watershed Management, Department of City Planning, Atlanta Housing Authority and Atlanta Public Schools.

3. **Ensure communities across the city have access** to recreational facilities, amenities and programs that can provide a wide variety of programs to promote social, multi-generational and cross-cultural recreational opportunities and interaction.
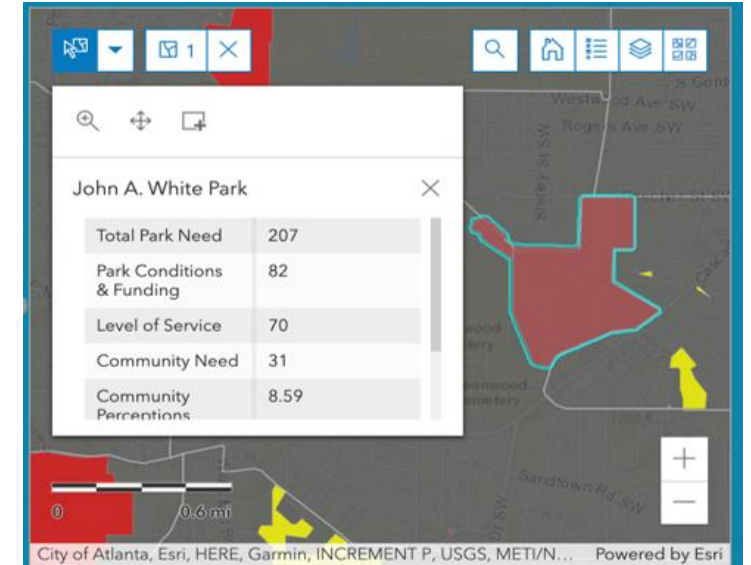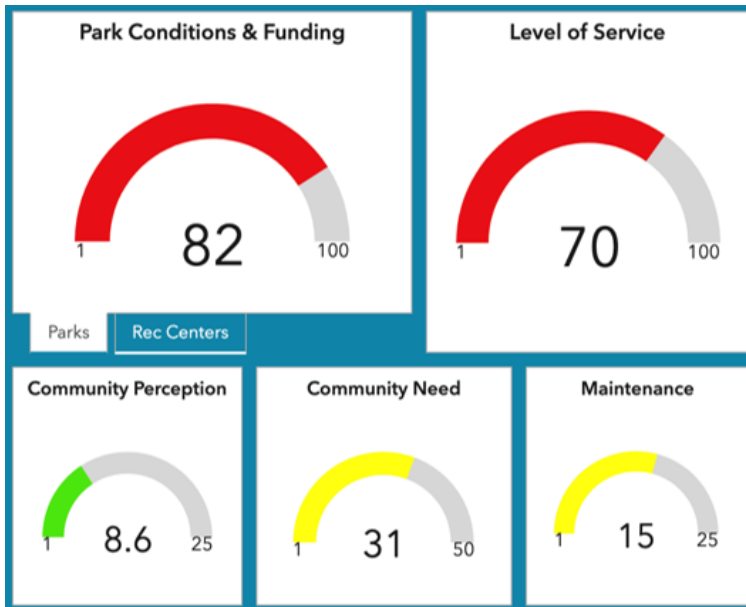
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4. **Collaborate with partners** to expand healthy food access through programming, green markets, updated kitchens in recreation centers, community gardens, and urban food forests - especially where access to food-growing space is limited.

5. **Increase access to high-quality outdoor facilities** by building new athletic fields, courts, and other amenities in areas of demonstrated need based on findings from the Needs Assessment and the growth of the city's population.

6. **Ensure that there is an appropriate allocation of parks and recreation staff and resources to meet the increased demands** of parks and recreation system growth, including new park acquisition, development of new facilities, increased recreation programs and events.

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City of Atlanta Parks and Recreation Equity Data Tool
A Data-driven Tool for Prioritizing Investments across the City of Atlanta

- Aligns with Mayor Bottoms' One Atlanta vision
- Measures and compares **15 health metrics** across neighborhoods
- **Uses data to prioritize** parks and neighborhoods with the greatest need

Data Includes:

- Private Funding
- Level of Service Score
- Physical Park Conditions
- Physical Rec Center Conditions
- Public Capital Improvement Funding
- Public Maintenance Funding
- Community perceptions (statistically valid surveys)
- Community Need Score
  - *Includes demographics, safety, mobility and transportation access, physical environment, social and economic factors*

Measuring Success: Monthly Key Performance Indicators (KPIs); Benchmark Cities (ParkScore); Equity Tool Kit; Community Needs / Survey Results

John A. White Park

Total Park Need	207
Park Conditions & Funding	82
Level of Service	70
Community Need	31
Community Perceptions	8.59

City of Atlanta, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, METI/N...   Powered by Esri

Park Conditions & Funding — 82 (1 - 100)
Level of Service — 70 (1 - 100)
Parks | Rec Centers
Community Perception — 8.6 (1 - 25)
Community Need — 31 (1 - 50)
Maintenance — 15 (1 - 25)

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Timeline

Step	Dates
CDHS First Read	October 12
Atlanta Planning Advisory Board (APAB) Presentation	October 16
Public Comment Period	October 20 – November 19
NPU Presentations	October 20 – November 18
CDHS Final Read	November 30
City Council Adoption	December 6

Public Comments/Feedback

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- Replace playgrounds, address erosion control measures, add trash bins, better signage, and improve restrooms (Goal #1, Action 1)

- Programming at parks (Goal #1, Action 3)

- Acknowledge Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Greater access/acceptance by park conservancies of all residents (Goal #1, Action 5)

- Improve safety & security measures - more cameras (Goal #1, Action 6)

- Encourage more volunteers (Goal #2, Action 4)

- Educate public on maintenance needs – "Teach people they must also be responsible to help maintain the parks." (Goal #2, Action 5)

- Provide unprogrammed access to meeting spaces at Recreation Centers - Make rec centers into community centers where residents can use nonprogrammed space. (Goal #3, Action 3, Task 2)

- Fear of fees associated with DPR pools – "Will there be fees charged to swim at Maddox Park?"

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