



# ACTIVATE ATL: The Blueprint to the Future

The City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is excited to announce that *Activate ATL: Recreation and Parks for All* has been officially adopted by City Council! The 10-year comprehensive masterplan is the City's blueprint toward achieving a world-class parks and recreation system. The plan identifies three major goals: INVEST in Atlanta's parks and recreation assets, CONNECT Atlanta's parks and recreation resources, and GROW the parks and recreation system.

## COMMUNITY INSPIRED

"Activate ATL is rooted in the belief that great parks and recreation systems make great cities," says DPR Commissioner John Dargle.

"Therefore, the plan establishes DPR's ambitious long-range framework that aims to transform the City's parks and recreation system into one of the most successful and dynamic systems in the nation!" Activate ATL was built for the people by the people. In June 2020, DPR launched an intensive evaluation of the existing conditions of the parks and recreation system, population growth and nationwide trends. Through the most robust and inclusive community engagement campaign DPR has ever undertaken, more than 10,000 Atlantans across every zip code contributed valuable input toward the plan's development via focus groups, surveys and public meeting engagements.

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## EQUITABLE ACCESS

Equity is a driving force of the Activate ATL plan. It addresses inequities and geographic disparities within the parks and recreation system, particularly in historically underserved communities. This year, DPR will introduce an interactive Equity Data Tool that will help guide prioritization by using data-driven mapping to accurately identify parks, recreation centers, and neighborhoods with the greatest need.

“Atlanta is growing, and our parks and recreation system must keep up with residents’ needs,” states Commissioner Dargle. “From improving maintenance in existing facilities, offering exceptional recreational programming, connecting trails, greenways, and nature preserves, expanding biking and walking trails, and of course, maintaining the incredible BeltLine.” Stay connected with us as implementation gets underway. Together, let’s Activate ATL!

**LEARN MORE AT** <http://activate-atl.com/index.html>

# The “New” Spaghetti Junction

In nearly every place you look in Atlanta, expansion is on the rise. A new structural masterpiece was recently added to the City of Atlanta’s inventory with the opening of the Confluence Bridge near the north and south forks of Peachtree Creek. The \$2.5 million project, spearheaded by the South Fork Conservancy (SFC) in partnership with the Georgia Department of Transportation and other collaborative funders, has been six years in the making. Boasting viewing platforms that span over 300 feet, nature lovers can enjoy easy access to nature trails, restored habitats and the serene creek.

“We couldn’t be more excited to get this bridge open. It provides an important new avenue for Atlantans to better connect to nature and enjoy trails along this historic waterway,” said SFC chair, Julie Ralston. “The spectacular structure provides access to much needed green space in a park-deprived area and connects to several other key pathways, creating a virtual ‘spaghetti junction’ of trails.”

The opening of the bridge is just the beginning. The conservancy is installing a series of trails that will extend from the Atlanta BeltLine Spur at Lindbergh Drive to Emory University. For more information about the Confluence Bridge and to explore the South Fork Conservancy trail maps, please visit [www.southforkconservancy.org](http://www.southforkconservancy.org).



Courtesy Rob Knight, Buckhead.com



# a message from the **COMMISSIONER**

As Atlantans begin to establish their footing in what many refer to as the “new normal,” a focus on the future of our parks and recreation facilities has proven to be both timely and relevant. More and more, residents and visitors alike are visiting City of Atlanta parks and trails to safely socialize, exercise and enjoy.

Our 10-year comprehensive masterplan, Activate ATL, is rooted in the belief that great parks and recreation systems make great cities! An example of this realization can be seen this spring as DPR, in collaboration with the Friends of A.D. Williams Park, hosts a ribbon cutting to celebrate new enhancements to the playground, community garden, basketball court and baseball field. Thanks to a Legacy Grant funded by our partners at Park Pride and a matching grant by Rebuild Atlanta and Republic

Services, the community’s vision is in motion. Atlantans can expect to see more collaborations and improvements like these as masterplan implementation gets underway.

In closing, I’d like to thank the thousands of Atlanta residents who gave us their input during the masterplan development. We heard you! Now the work begins.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Dargle, Jr.", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

John Dargle, Jr.



**A.D. WILLIAMS PARK**

# CITY OF ATLANTA TENNIS WELCOMES USTA

We are excited to offer the USTA Adult Apprentice Program at Joseph McGhee and Bitsy Grant tennis centers!

Due to high demand, a youth apprentice program is now offered at Bitsy! Adult and youth six-week sessions are ongoing and just \$60. Upon completion, USTA can connect players to additional programming or assist them in joining a USTA team. To register for a future session, visit [www.ustaatlanta.com/tennisapprentice](http://www.ustaatlanta.com/tennisapprentice) or call 770.416.4333

## YOUTH TENNIS APPRENTICE

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Get on the fast-track to  
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# TUP HOLMES: *THE GAME CHANGER!*

In a landmark ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, amateur golfer Alfred "Tup" Holmes made history by opening the door for African Americans to have equal access to City of Atlanta parks and recreational facilities, in particular its golf courses.

The historic move began in July 1951 when Tup and three others, attempted a game of golf at Atlanta's Bobby Jones Golf Course. They were denied access because of their race. The gentlemen typically played at Lincoln Park which among other issues, only had a 9-hole course. "It was the only golf course open to Blacks [in Atlanta] and it was not maintained the same [as white-only courses] and was definitely not equal," states City of Atlanta Golf Services General Manager, Jeff King. "He wanted to play at the nicer, well-maintained City courses as well."

Born to a prominent family in East Point, Georgia in 1917, Tup Holmes graduated from Booker T. Washington High School and earned a degree at Tuskegee Institute. He played on the college varsity golf team and won three consecutive Negro Intercollegiate Championships. Tup qualified for the 1939 NCAA Golf Tournament, but was turned away there as well.

Seeking to amend the segregated standard, the Holmes family filed an injunction against the City to end discriminatory practices. In 1954, the court ruled that Atlanta could maintain "separate but equal" courses or select days for Black golfers to use public courses. Future Justice Thurgood Marshall joined the legal team, yet attempts to appeal failed. That changed November 7, 1955 when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the previous ruling, setting a new precedent for years to come!

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**ALFRED "TUP" HOLMES**  
(Courtesy Alfred "Tup" Holmes Memorial Golf Course)



**Tup Holmes, Charles Bell and Oliver Wendell Holmes at North Fulton Golf Course (Courtesy Alfred "Tup" Holmes Memorial Golf Course)**

To celebrate the victory, and to avert the resistance build up at Bobby Jones Golf Course, Mr. Holmes played his first round at North Fulton Golf Courses (now Chastain Park Golf Course) Christmas Eve. "I'm elated that he had the nerves and courage to break those barriers," explains former NFL player and DPR Assistant Director of Facilities, Andre Townsend. "Black people have been playing [golf] for years!"

In 1983, the former City of Atlanta Adams Park Golf Course was renamed Alfred "Tup" Holmes Memorial Golf Course. Many pictures and memorabilia are displayed inside the Pro Shop. Mr. Holmes passed away at the age

of 50, yet his contributions are still opening doors. "There would be no Tiger Woods without Holmes and the Supreme Court ruling," shares DPR Deputy Commissioner Alvin Dodson. Tup Holmes was inducted into the National Black Golf Hall of Fame in 2006 and the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame in 2012.



**Tup Holmes, Dr. Hamilton Mayo Holmes and Oliver Wendell Holmes (Courtesy Alfred "Tup" Holmes Memorial Golf Course)**

# *larger than life*



**Courtesy Piedmont Tennis Association**

"Sharon Lester had a larger-than-life personality," says DPR Recreation Director Ramondo Davidson. "She was feisty, fearless and an extremely competitive sportswoman." Sharon was a USTA 4.5 player who managed Piedmont Tennis Center for eleven of her twenty-year tenure with DPR's Office of Recreation. She was a great support to the tennis community and assisted in coaching Grady High School's girl's tennis team. "Sharon Lester kept tennis fun while playing a fierce game and coaching her opponent through it all," says Davidson. This beautiful spirit passed away unexpectedly in 2007 at the age of 44. The tennis center at Piedmont Park is named in her honor. We honor her legacy!



Courtesy Jasen Johns

# CITY OF ATLANTA WINS TREE CITY USA AWARD FOR 37<sup>TH</sup> YEAR!

Georgia Arbor Day falls on the third Friday of every February, and City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation has much to celebrate in 2022. The work of the Office of Parks in the areas of urban and community-based forestry resulted in the City of Atlanta's 37<sup>th</sup> consecutive Tree City USA Award from the Arbor Day Foundation and Georgia Forestry Commission. The award recognizes excellence in environmental stewardship, in particular the conservation and growth of a city's tree canopy.

The City of Atlanta along with community partners Trees Atlanta, Atlanta Downtown Improvement District, and Central Atlanta Progress kicked off a week of activities rejuvenating the city's urban forest just in time for spring. Activities included the official launch of the Downtown Urban Tree Planting Plan in Walton Spring Park. The initiative is aimed at planting over 8,000 trees along streets as well as on underutilized land in the heart of Atlanta.

Through the Office of Parks contracted Neighborhoods program, Trees Atlanta lead Georgia Arbor Day tree-planting projects in Four Corners Park, Lindridge-Martin Manor, Armand Road Greenspace, Grove Park, Arthur Langford Jr. Park, and Cascade Springs Nature Preserve. Trees Atlanta also distributed native saplings free-of-charge to community members, who took home witch hazel, redbud, persimmon, and southern red oak trees to plant in their own yards.

Jasen Johns contributed this article and is a Senior Arborist with City of Atlanta.



Courtesy Jasen Johns

# Advancing Recreation Programs Through Partnership

The City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has a longstanding partnership with the Atlanta Hawks and is designated a Junior Hawks Affiliate. State Farm joined forces with the two entities in 2018. "This collaboration adds a high level of value to the services we offer," states Office of Recreation Director, Ramondo Davidson.

The Tickets for Kids initiative is just one example of the expanded access Atlanta's inner-city kids enjoy. Participants enrolled in athletic or cheer programs receive Hawks game-day access. Often, kids are pre-selected to interact with players during warm up, and rec centers attending appear on the jumbotron.

The State Farm Good Neighbor Club is another way this partnership is making a difference through programming. Four City recreation centers host the club: Bessie Branham, William Walker, Pittman and most recently, Coan.

In December 2021, Coan became the first and only State Farm Good Neighbor Club in the nation to offer a multi-sensory inclusion room for youth with varying sensory needs and disabilities. "We are the only location in the City of Atlanta Parks & Recreation that has a program for kids with special needs," shares Facility Manager, Diallo Robertson who originated the concept. The quiet space features a flat screen TV, video game console, books, iPads, classroom tables for homework assistance, a play area and more!

The Office of Recreation recently received a \$250K Boost Grant from the Georgia Recreation and Parks Association. The grant will be used to help fund additional after and out-of-school programs. Stay tuned.







# The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference **PARKS NOW** WE NEED

Since 2020, expectations for parks and outdoor spaces have increased dramatically. No longer are parks nice-to-haves; they are essential to our everyday quality of life. Can pre-pandemic design, management, and funding strategies keep pace with the increased reliance we have on parks?

[Park Pride's 21st Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference](#) aims to answer these questions and more. Join local and national thought-leaders, park professionals, and community members at the Southeast's largest greenspace conference on Monday, March 28 at the Atlanta Botanical Garden. Together, we'll explore new strategies and actions to create the parks and park systems that communities need NOW. Learn more and register at [parkpride.org/conference](#).

**JOIN US!**  
Monday, March 28, 2022  
Atlanta Botanical Garden  
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Register Today:  
[parkpride.org/conference](#)

presented by **COX**

**Keynote Speakers**

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Principal, PROS Consulting, Inc.
- Aklima Price**  
Atlanta Price Consulting
- Norma Edith Garcia-Gonzales**  
Director, LA County Dept. of Parks & Recreation
- Meghan Talarowski**  
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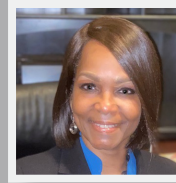
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

This month, we acknowledge the countless men, women and children who daily display unwavering courage, ingenuity and resilience in the face of great adversity. We may never know their names or hear of their experiences, yet we know they exist. During Black History Month, we celebrated the known: those who have made a difference and for whose sacrifices we are the beneficiaries. Let us also celebrate the lesser known: the bus drivers, park workers, coaches, custodians, teachers and others who influence our lives – often unknowingly. We see you. Keep inspiring!

Yolanda Harris

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