



RODNEY COOK SR., PARK

## RODNEY COOK, SR. PARK EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

It's been less than a year since the City of Atlanta launched the opening of Cook Park in historic Vine City, and already it has earned several noteworthy achievements with more on the way! Cook Park has been recognized by the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) to receive the 2022 ACEC National Engineering Excellence Grand Award! It is in the running to receive the Grand Conceptor Award as well.

A collaboration between community residents, the Department of Watershed, the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Trust for Public Land, the 16-acre state-of-the-art park boasts significant, sustainable features, including a terraced water feature, a majestic stormwater pond with wetlands and rain gardens. Amenities include a playground, splashpad, multi-purpose courts, pavilions, outdoor exercise equipment, and a rock-climbing wall.

Cook Park is also the recipient of the 2022 Innovation in Sustainable Engineering Award for its collaborative design

effort and watershed achievement. A trophy will officially be presented by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Committee on Sustainability in June during the 2022 World Environmental and Water Resources Congress in Atlanta.

### OTHER AWARDS BY ACEC INCLUDE:

Grand Design Award – best in the nation

Grand Prize Award – best in the state

Regional Excellence Award – best in the region

State Award – best project in 10 categories

Previously, Cook Park was recognized with the Great Place Award by the Atlanta Regional Commission's 2021 Regional Excellence Awards for Environmental Design. It also received the Merit Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects and was recently placed for the People's Choice Award. Located in Atlanta's major cultural hub, Cook Park opened July 7, 2021. At press time, the Urban Land Institute designated Cook Park as the 2022 recipient of the distinguished Award of Excellence!



# Mayor Makes Good

After years of advocacy, Atlanta's 61<sup>st</sup> Mayor historically signed into legislation the acquisition of the Chattahoochee Brick Company. The \$27 million purchase was made possible through a partnership with The Conservancy Fund supported by The Kendeda Fund. The 75 acres will offer direct access to the Chattahoochee. The site forced convicted laborers, mostly African Americans, to produce roughly 200,000 bricks daily for profit. Many died in the process. In April, City Council unanimously passed legislation to allow the city to purchase the land.

DCCO LaChandra Burks says, "We will work very hard to give the public access to the space in a Phase I process as we continue to raise dollars for [development]." An official ceremony is planned this summer as the visioning process begins.

RECREATION & PARKS FOR ALL  
**ACTIVATE  
ATL**

## POPULATION, GROWTH, PARKS AND ACTIVATE ATL

by Tara Buckner



Through our comprehensive master plan, *Activate ATL*, the City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) aims to improve livability and ease tensions that challenge the quality of life for Atlantans. As cities across the globe address complex issues such as population density, affordable housing, blight, and the challenges that climate change causes for people, wildlife and natural habitats, parks are powerful tools for urban communities. Parks and recreational programming offer several benefits: improved mental health, connectivity to nature, reduced crime, and social cohesion.

They also provide a framework for serving disadvantaged communities. At the height of the pandemic, Atlanta parks witnessed a huge uptick in visitors. Our recreation centers also became a lifeline for families by providing meals and learning pods to support virtual learning.

*Activate ATL: Recreation and Parks for All* is the roadmap to guide decision making relative to improvement of amenities, site maintenance, and DPRs capacity to compete with park systems in other cities over the next 10 years. Key goals are to equitably invest, connect, and grow Atlanta's parks and recreation system.

As implementation begins, DPR will continue to be a major contributor to solutions for managing growth and sustaining our great city!





## a message from the **COMMISSIONER**

Many exciting things are going on in the Department of Parks and Recreation! Recently, we hosted the successful launch of Midnight Basketball at C.T. Martin Natatorium and Recreation Center. We also acquired Lower Paul Park. In addition, several ribbon cuttings were held to celebrate new upgrades and amenities at some of our parks. Stay connected through our social media channels for the latest news and updates.

John Dargle, Jr.



Sidney Marcus Park



AD Williams Park

# USTA TENNIS




## SINGLES LADDER

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**COST:** \$30  
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**PLAY AS MANY OR AS FEW MATCHES AS YOU WANT**

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5-12  
13-18

June 6 - July 22 | Monday - Friday | 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
 Over 20 Locations | Breakfast and Lunch Provided  
 \$35/Week Residents | \$110/Week Non-Residents  
 \$65/Week Athletic Camps  
**Scholarships Available!**

# a new park by the WATER

by Priti Shah

The City of Atlanta recently acquired approximately nine acres of land allowing the Department of Parks and Recreation to develop its first-ever park with anticipated access to the Chattahoochee River. Referred to as Lower Paul Park, the acquisition was made possible through partnerships with The Conservation Fund and Park Pride: both members of the mayor's Greenspace Advisory Council. (See it here: <https://vimeo.com/701019512>)

Acquired March 4, the assemblage consists of 17 greenspace properties within the Northwest Atlanta Riverside neighborhood with three parcels donated by Georgia Power. "Acquiring this land allows the City to provide our residents with public access to the Chattahoochee River and offer needed parkland to the Riverside community—all while preserving beautiful greenspace for future generations," said Mayor Dickens.

**WANT TO REIMAGINE  
YOUR COMMUNITY  
PARK?**



If your community is interested in reimagining its neighborhood park, Park Pride is accepting applications for the next round of park visioning in mid-June. Visit [parkpride.org/visioning](https://parkpride.org/visioning), for more information.

To learn more about Park Pride's Grantmaking Program, visit

<https://parkpride.org/we-can-help/grant-programs/>

The City's purchase of Lower Paul Park contributes to the Trust for Public Land's Chattahoochee Riverlands vision—a linear, 53-mile river corridor network of greenways, blue ways and parks to reunite the river with metro Atlanta. Details of the visioning process, led by Park Pride, can be found here: <https://lowerpaulpark.wixsite.com/visioning>

Video courtesy of Keith Whitney  
Photo credit: Aaron Weiner



Chattahoochee River at Lower Paul Park





# MIDNIGHT BASKETBALL

It's the most talked about event in the city and it's taking Atlanta by storm! The all-new Midnight Basketball League is an initiative geared toward strengthening public safety and is spearheaded by Mayor Andre Dickens in collaboration with the Atlanta Police Department and the Department

of Parks and Recreation. "Crime is a community problem that requires a community solution," said Mayor Dickens. By offering constructive, engaging programming in susceptible communities, the mayor hopes this positive alternative will produce a lasting impact. Many major cities have successfully implemented Midnight Basketball, but the City of Atlanta takes it a step further by providing onsite resources for players and spectators. Examples include: job and banking assistance, GED preparedness, record expungement and therapeutic support. "The purpose of this basketball league is to turn people's lives around in a positive way," DPR Director of Recreation Ramondo Davidson shared. "Our focus is to facilitate the need and provide enjoyment for the community." While games are not played at midnight per se, league play occurs during nontraditional hours when

most violent crimes occur. Games are held weekly Wednesdays @ 7 p.m. at C. T. Martin Natatorium and Recreation Center and offer an enthusiastic atmosphere for spectators featuring a live DJ, play-by-play, giveaways and surprise performances. Food and admission are FREE! This summer, games expand to a second location, Rosel Fann Recreation Center, and ultimately around the city.



## THE RETURN OF IN-PERSON SUMMER PROGRAMS

Mayor Andre Dickens announced the return of in-person Prime-Time Senior programming and outdoor swimming at all City of Atlanta pools during a press conference at Reverend James Orange Park in Atlanta's beloved Oakland City neighborhood. During the announcement, Mayor Dickens also announced that both programs will be FREE! May 28, outdoor pools will open daily 12:30 – 7 p.m. beginning Memorial Day weekend. Summer programming for seniors also begins in-person Monday, June 6.



## MORE FUN SOLUTIONS

**Summer Teen Basketball League**  
July 5 - July 28 | Ages 13 – 18 | Free  
Register thru June 24 at Zaban Rec. Ctr.  
Email: nrclark@atlantaga.gov or (404) 416-4909

**Prime-Time Senior Programs**  
Starts June 6 | Ages 55+  
Activities include arts & crafts, aromatherapy, healthy cooking, swimming, and more!  
Register: [www.atlantaga.gov](http://www.atlantaga.gov) or local recreation centers  
Email: [campbestfriends@atlantaga.gov](mailto:campbestfriends@atlantaga.gov)

**Youth Football & Cheer**  
Starts August 26 | Ages 5-12  
Register: [www.atlantaga.gov](http://www.atlantaga.gov) or local recreation centers  
Conditioning begins Tuesday, July 5  
Resident fees: \$75 | Non-residents: \$150  
Football: [CDJordan@atlantaga.gov](mailto:CDJordan@atlantaga.gov)  
Cheer: [Lclay@atlantaga.gov](mailto:Lclay@atlantaga.gov)

# Light as a Feather: Blue Heron Nature Preserve's 2022 Art of Nature Exhibition is in full swing!

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This free outdoor exhibition reflects the Preserve's commitment to harness the ecological diversity and natural beauty of a 30-acre City of Atlanta Park for the advancement of nature-inspired art. Directed by Blue Heron Artist-in-Residence KTauches, this Eighth Annual Exhibition features 10 provocative, environmentally-focused artworks and four collaborative performances along the Blueway Trail from nature-inspired artists in Georgia and the Southeast. The event closes Sunday, June 12, with a closing tour and performance.



## Contact Us

If you have a story or topic that you'd like us to consider, email us at [informdpr@atlantaga.gov](mailto:informdpr@atlantaga.gov).

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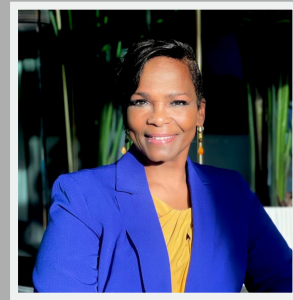
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## Credits

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**Deputy Commissioner:** Steven Ayccock  
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**Recreation Director:** Ramondo Davidson  
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

With the arrival of summer comes an exciting array of adventure! In this issue of Inform, we provide updates about FREE swim, the return of senior programming and new parks for future enjoyment. If you're searching for the perfect day camp, Camp Best Friends is the place for kids and teens ages 5 – 17! Scholarship assistance is available. Kudos to our Park Design team for making Cook Park an award winner!

Yolanda Harris

**City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation**

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