



## **Adopt-a-Park Overview**

Austin Parks and Recreation (PAR) believes that our success depends on the support, assistance, advocacy and enthusiasm of the public as stewards of their parks system. PAR wants to collaborate with partners to find the best practices and strategies to work together to enhance the park system.

The Adopt-a-Park Program is one of the key ways PAR partners with the community and encourages and supports collaboration and stewardship. The goal of the program is to build a sense of community pride and ownership around every park or facility. Park Adopters serve as a key community representative for the park by making an ongoing commitment, organizing a community-based volunteer group and by being inclusive and encouraging and welcoming all park stakeholders that are interested in the park to get involved.

Partners bring volunteers, technical expertise, in-kind donations, and private resources to the parks and that is absolutely needed. But we also recognize that partnerships bring more than resources, they also build ownership, encourage the enthusiasm and passion that partners have for parks they treasure, and ultimately bring greater effectiveness, innovation and creativity to the park system.

## **Adopt-a-Park Projects**

PAR has been working to develop systems and strategies to make this program and all of our collaborative projects as efficient, effective and successful as possible. This document provides an overview of the forms and strategies we are using to stay organized and document all the great work partners are doing through volunteer and community projects.

Adopt-a-Park projects and activities usually fall into two categories: **Volunteer Projects** and **Park Development Projects**.

### **Volunteer Projects**

These are routine and basic maintenance related projects. Projects are often completed on a single workday, but can also be done a regular and recurring basis. Volunteer projects generally do not require permitting or involve the Planning Office, are usually overseen by the Park Manager, and are reviewed and approved on a quick turnaround.

Examples include:

- Mulching, Weeding, Watering
- Gardening/Landscaping
- Litter Cleanup
- Painting, graffiti removal, minor repairs
- Manual invasive removal and habitat restoration

### **Goals for volunteer projects process are to:**

- make sure everyone is aware of the project and on the same page about the details
- keep track of PAR commitments to the project (materials, brush hauling, trash collection etc.)
- make sure we document all the great work volunteers are doing and show our appreciation.

### **Process for Volunteer Projects**

- Submit a Volunteer Project Proposal Form\* (form on website). If you need guidance or ideas on what needs to be done at the park, your Park Manager can help.
- Park Manager will review and approve the project, arrange and finalize project details with the group and sign the form

- We'll email the signed form back to the group leader. This provides written approval in case anyone questions the group's approval to be working at the park.
- Group Leader has volunteers sign Liability Release (from on website) and completes project
- Group Leader enters volunteer hours on our new online volunteer system (we'll go over this at the Adopt-a-Park mtg, and for those that can't attend we'll provide one-on-one assistance)
- Group leader sends pictures (if they have any) so we can post them on the website and Facebook page to help celebrate your accomplishments

\*The Volunteer Project Proposal Form is a pdf that can be completed and submitted via email. The form can also be signed electronically and returned to the group via email. The intent is that this is just as fast and efficient as sending emails, provides documentation, but causes no delays.

\*\* For regular and recurring maintenance workdays that have the same or similar tasks each time (ie monthly gardening, weeding or mulching), groups do not need to fill out a form each time. We can do a single form with a longer timeframe (eg: one year), include the general scope, and the group can provide notice with details in advance of the workday.

\*\*\* All forms are on the PARD website at <http://www.austintexas.gov/parks/adoptapark.htm>

### **Park Development Improvement Projects**

These are more complicated park improvement and construction projects. Projects typically involve permitting and/or construction and involve the Planning Office. Review and approval involves staff in multiple PARD divisions and can take up to 4 weeks.

Examples include:

- Park Equipment/Amenity Installation (benches, tables etc)
- Park Feature Construction (eg. Picnic pavilion)
- Landscaping/Site Design and Implementation
- Trail Construction/Enhancement

### **Process for Park Development Projects**

- Discuss your project concept with PARD staff in advance (highly encouraged)
- Submit a Community Initiated Improvement Project Application (form on website)
- PARD review and approval of project
- Project Implementation