

24 April, 2025

PARD + wkrm

Project Proposal Presentation



wkrm

is a student-run,
faculty-led design
studio providing the
experience of working
with clients in a
realistic setting and
support for their
professional
development

wkrm



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Harean Park



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Liam Tillery-Meyer



Maggie Cook



David Webber



Juan Christian King



Audrey Kirwin



Professor Jon Freach



Austin Nguyen



David Colcock

Our Team

PARD asked us to

Explore how volunteer coordination could be unified across divisions so they can better engage the community, track impact, and reduce reliance on PARKners to fill the gaps.

**You're not coordinated around
volunteer coordination.**

**“If you can’t measure it, you
can’t manage it.”**

Your perception of equity does not always align with the community's.

**The work of community
engagement is never done.**

**If you want volunteers,
you need to make
volunteering _____**

If you want volunteers,
you need to make
volunteering visible

If you want volunteers,
you need to make
volunteering accessible

If you want volunteers,
you need to make
volunteering actionable

**If you want volunteers,
you need to make
volunteering engaging**

Who do I ask?

What am I doing here?

What is CAPP?

Where do I go?

Where is the website?

What is a PARKner?

Nature Play?



Who do I ask?

What am I doing here?

We aren't sure..

What is CAPP?

Where do I go?

EMAILS!!

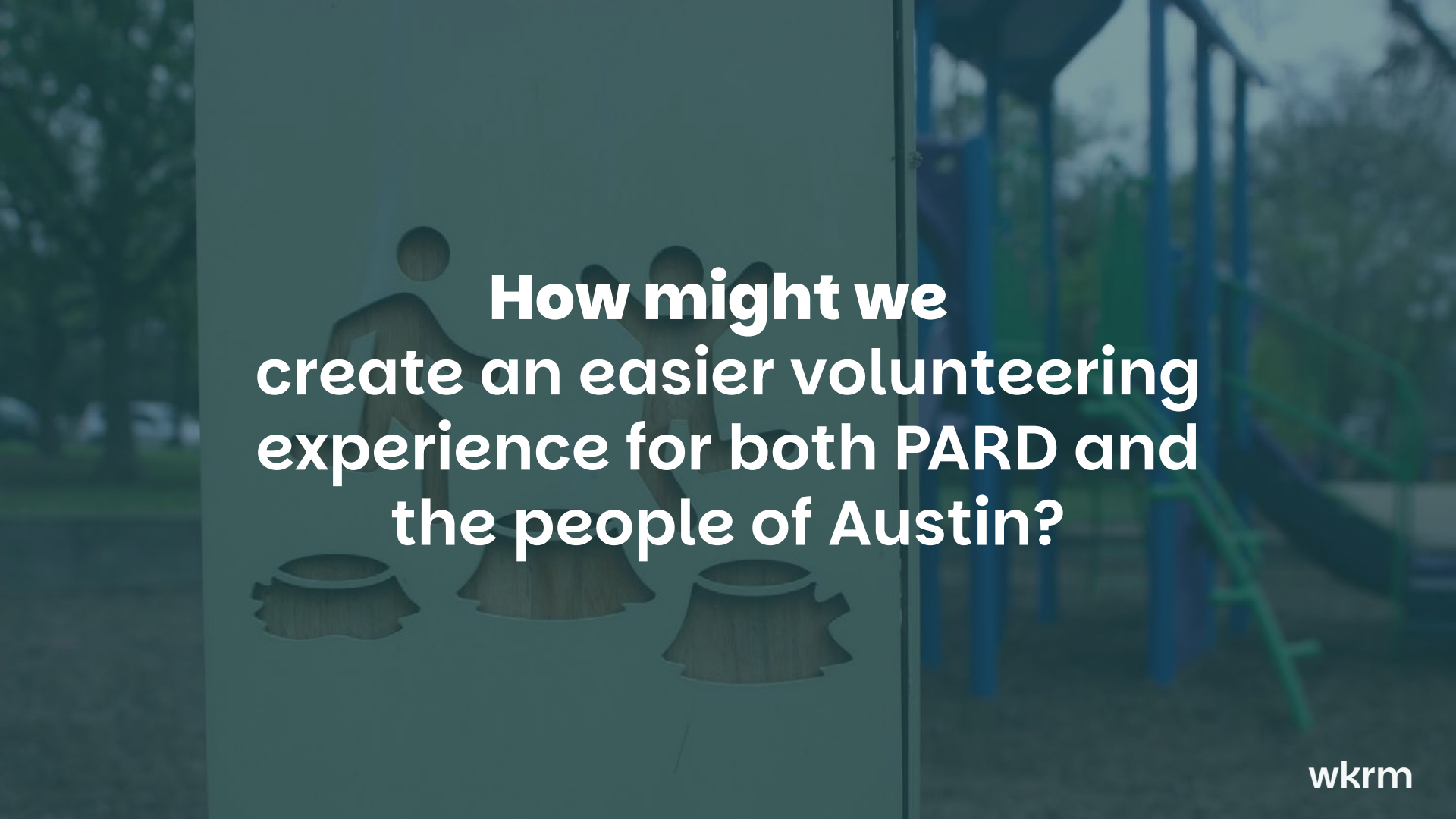
Where is the website?

What is a PARKner?

What?

Wait! It isn't updated!

Nature Play?

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a playground with blue and green equipment. Overlaid on this is a dark teal semi-transparent rectangle. Inside this rectangle, there are white silhouettes of three people standing and three tree stumps. The text is centered in white, bold font.

**How might we
create an easier volunteering
experience for both PARD and
the people of Austin?**

Our Process

Problem Framing

Interviews

Concepting

Research

Synthesis

Next Steps



Problem Framing & Research

Where can we view info in the ULI?

Liz intakes and exports volunteer interest emails

East side parks have a hard time activating

There's not a coordinated effort

There needs to be a mindset shift

It is difficult to view the impact based on the numbers

Majority of roles are litter pickup!

PARD can't coordinate with volunteers directly

The problem is resources imbalance

There is a lack of a shared vision

There is no adequate way to track environmental impact

They have the liability, but no one to coordinate through

PARD doesn't know what East side wants

Available data is minimal, makes it difficult to advocate for pard needs

Work isn't getting done where it's most needed

Data looks unattractive!

Data is not collected uniformly

We need to build better relationships

Stewardship needs numbers to make plans

Volunteers themselves don't know how to count their efforts

There is no internal coordinator for pard needs

Resource imbalance means less activation!

PARD doesn't have insurance, tools, or compliance

Implicit Bias!

There are not enough properly trained staff for projects

It's hard to plan ahead and make goals for the future

There are inconsistent expectations for reporting

PARD perception is different than the the community

It is difficult to scale to larger events without staffing

There is no maintained relationship

How often do PARKners submit their data?

PARD FY report is not as accurate as it could be

There is a need for more trail specific stewardship

Needs aren't met, trust isn't created!

People don't trust pard despite their efforts

Reports are logged annually on wufoo

Coordination

Liz intakes and exports volunteer interest emails

There's not a coordinated effort

Majority of roles are litter pickup!

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Equity

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Resource imbalance means less activation!

Implicit Bias!

PARD perception is different than the the community

There is no maintained relationship

Needs aren't met, trust isn't created!

PARD perception is different than the the community

We identified elements of the problem that we wanted to address—then brainstormed

1
The problem is... there is a clear level of mistrust (and in turn discommunication) between Austin residents in under-served communities and PARD
This is a problem for... both PARD and these areas
This is a problem because... PARD's involvement in equity work has been limited and somewhat exclusionary without the participation of these areas. The areas don't get the attention they need
EQUITY

2 Kirwin
The problem is
There is not a shared vision between PARD and stakeholders.
This is a problem because
Multiple channels of communication at work, each having different goals, and in the fact there is no internal connection.
EQUITY & COORD. 2

25
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and!
rability
need

Coordination

PARD has no internal coordinator to manage communication between PARD and its stakeholders.

Data

PARD's volunteer data is collected regularly, but it is not collected *frequently* and could be better presented in a way that highlights environmental impact.

Equity

Underserved Austin parks and greenspaces struggle with resource imbalance and gaining traction with park stewardship/volunteering efforts.



What we learned



Liz Cardinal



Caitlen Hill



Sona Shah



Yasmine Anderson



Warinda Harris



Christine Chute Canul



Justin Schneider



Merrideth Jiles

Our Interviewees

Finding

Email is the main communication tool, contributing to a redundancy in tasks.

Data is sometimes inconsistent and is only collected annually.



“

Only people ‘in the know’ are in the email chain.

- Liz Cardinal

Community Services
Program Coordinator

Finding

Stewardship suffered from project gaps, trail specific needs, and role turnover.

“

There are gaps in our project execution.

- Christine Chute Canul



Community PARKnerships
Program Manager

wkrm

Finding

PARD lacks volunteer feedback, clear success metrics, and the capacity to meet citywide demands alone.

“

PARD is complicated underneath the band aid.

- Justin Schneider



Community Engagement
Consultant

Finding

There is disorganization of data with low visibility, and it can bury important work and community efforts.

“

Cemeteries are places of nature too!

- Caitlen Hill



Cemetery Programs
Manager

Finding

PARD needs coordinated supervision for volunteer activities. Volunteers need to know what to do and what not to do.

“

What happens if the champion is not there?

- Merrideth Jiles



Park Grounds &
Horticulture Manager

Finding

PARD values equity but faces resource challenges. Underserved communities need stronger voice and recognition.

“

Communities understand equity best.

- Warinda Harris



Central Texas Interfaith
Organizer

Finding

There is a lack of clarity about what long-term goals are and how to pursue them.

Our conversation with Sona Shah highlighted a need for greater alignment and clarity within PARD's and the city's broader equity efforts— particularly when it comes to defining long-term objectives and what equity really looks like in practice.



Sona Shah
Equity & Inclusion
Program Manager

Finding

To engage the community, PARD must work with the community to better understand their needs.

“

“I can’t build momentum when everyone is overwhelmed, and resources are scarce but [I’ve] discovered that even small moments of genuine community connection can create ripple effects”

- Yasmine Anderson



Cities Connecting Children to
Nature Program Coordinator

wkrm





We visited Givens District Park and Sanchez School Park to gain perspective on where our signage would ideally live.

While there, we met community members who provided us with valuable insights to further improving PARD's equity outreach.

**Equity isn't a milestone—it's
an ongoing relationship.**

Finding

Parks in underserved areas are often mischaracterized as unsafe, which limits support, resources, and public engagement.

“

There's bad boys here but there are bad boys everywhere.

- Givens Park resident

Finding

These parks already have vibrant communities, but there's a fear that PARD wants to “renew” them instead of simply “uplift” what's already there.

“

We're like one big, happy dysfunctional family.

- Givens Park resident

Finding

Underserved parks want PARD to collaborate with existing community leaders/neighbors already caring for these spaces.

“

Neighbors have started taking care of it [Kendra Page Park] because it's so neglected... support would go a long way.

- Sanchez School Park resident

Finding

Strong and deep community pride exists, but distrust of outsiders limits local involvement.

“

We don't fit good in Westlake.

- *Givens Park resident*



Establish Trust

With both PARD and community members

Seek Collaboration

Encourage partnerships beyond PARD's own PARKner system

Uplift Community

Amplify local communities and underrepresented voices

Clarify Intentions

Disclosing equity goals beyond PARD team

Rebuild Reputation

Help avoid misrepresentation of underserved areas

Community Stewards Equity

**PARD needs harmony
between systems, people,
and purpose.**



Understanding the Volunteer Experience

Awareness



*“Where can I start?
Where should I look?”*

Connection



*Evaluating how they
want to engage.*

Action



*Successful park
volunteering event!*

Retention

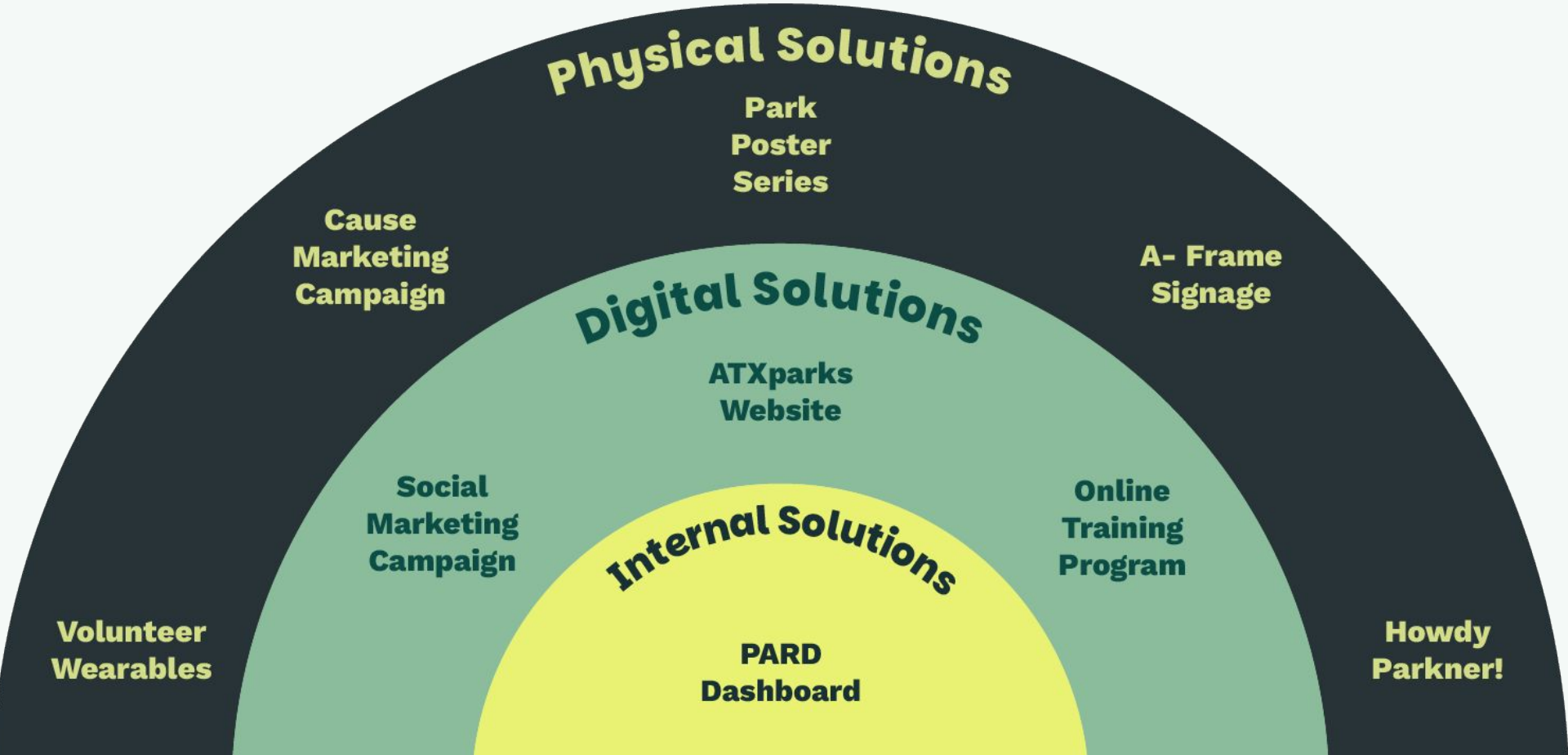


*Continued interest,
fuels action!*

We imagine a future where
**PARD leads with trust, clarity,
and shared purpose so
everyone moves together.**

Make volunteering

for volunteers



Physical Solutions

Park
Poster
Series

Cause
Marketing
Campaign

A- Frame
Signage

Digital Solutions

ATXparks
Website

Social
Marketing
Campaign

Online
Training
Program

Internal Solutions

PARD
Dashboard

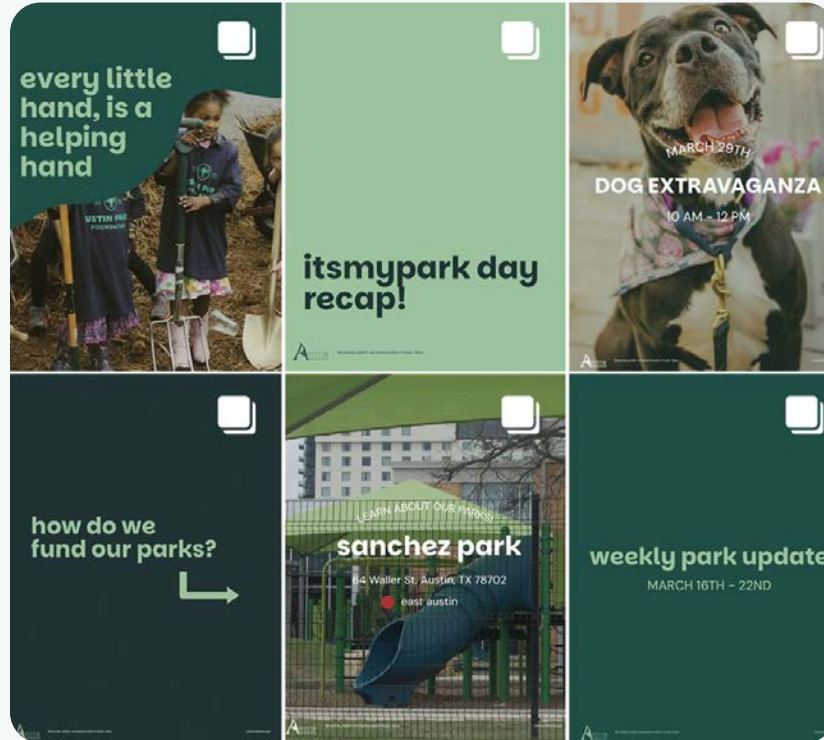
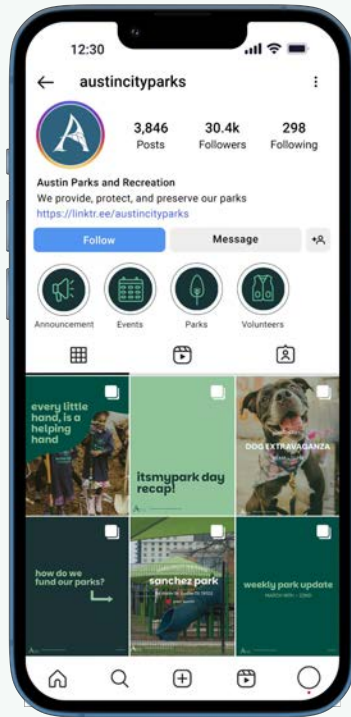
Volunteer
Wearables

Howdy
Parkner!

Make volunteering **Visible for volunteers**

Cause Campaign

Social Media Awareness






nature play

perfect space and playground for outdoor activities and stimulation!

- logs for obstacle courses
- boulders/ rocks for seating
- small rock trail

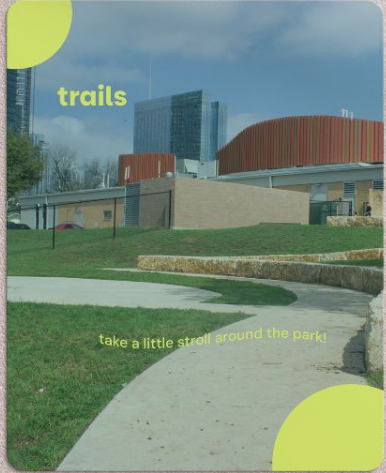


take a little stroll around the park!

👍 🗨️ 📍 📌

👤👤👤 Liked By Jhone and others

🏠 🔍 📅 🛒 👤



always respect and restore YOUR parks

every little action is an impact

- trash pick-up
- log ends need to be resealed
- natural materials wear down in ways plastic doesn't

wherever you go, the community will grow

nature play
 perfect space and playground for outdoor activities and stimulation!
 logs for obstacle courses
 boulders/ rocks for seating
 small rock trail

LEARN ABOUT OUR PARKS

sanchez park
 84 Waller St, Austin, TX 78702
 east austin

Always respect and restore YOUR parks
 Every little action is an impact
 Trash pick-up
 Bag ends need to be resealed
 Natural materials wear down in ways plastic doesn't

**wherever you go,
 the community
 will grow**

DOG EXTRAVAGANZA
 MARCH 29TH
 10 AM - 12 PM

FREE EVENT
 Date: Saturday, March 29th
 Time: 10AM- 12PM
 Location: Metz Neighborhood Park, 2407 Canterbury St.
 Contact: PH (512) 978-2399

**Calling all dogs
 BARKING for a
 good time!**

**its my park day
 recap!**

mulch love!

honor the past,

preserve the future.

in caring for austin's cemeteries.

We provide, protect, and preserve parks in Austin, Texas. www.austintexas.gov

it'd be a lot cooler if you did.

Our mission is simple. We provide, protect, and preserve parks in Austin, Texas. However, We provide, protect, and preserve parks in Austin, Texas.

A AUSTIN TEXAS RECREATION

We provide, protect, and preserve parks in Austin, Texas.

because grass stains go with everything.

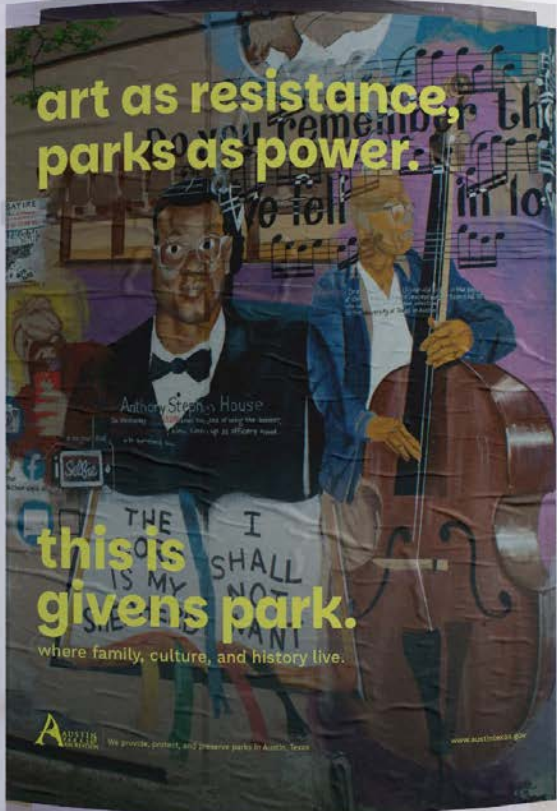
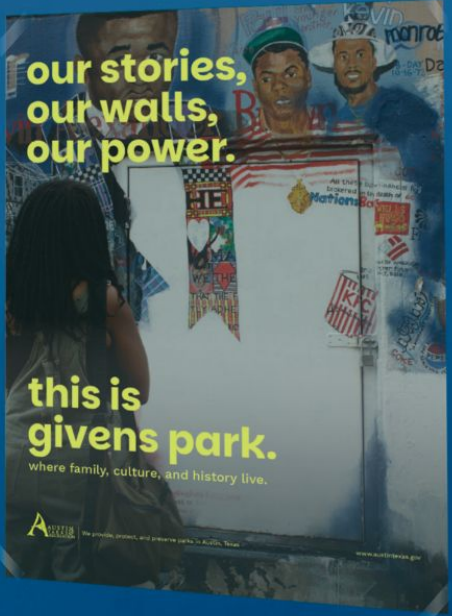
play how mother nature intended.

A AUSTIN TEXAS RECREATION

We provide, protect, and preserve parks in Austin, Texas.



Givens District Park





time to branch out.

help save the trees, volunteer today.



www.austintexas.gov

www.austintexas.gov

help preserve
yours,
mine,
& ours.



Volunteer Today. www.austinitexas.gov

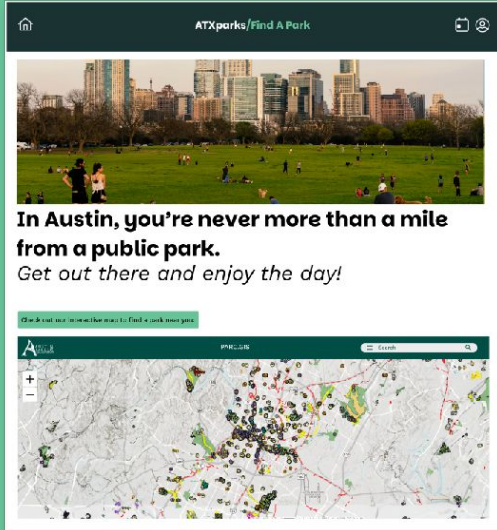


Make volunteering **Accessible for volunteers**

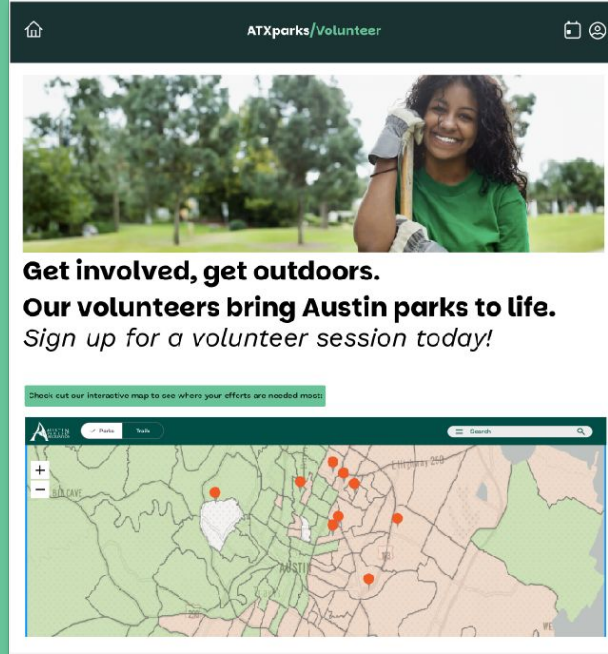
ATX Parks



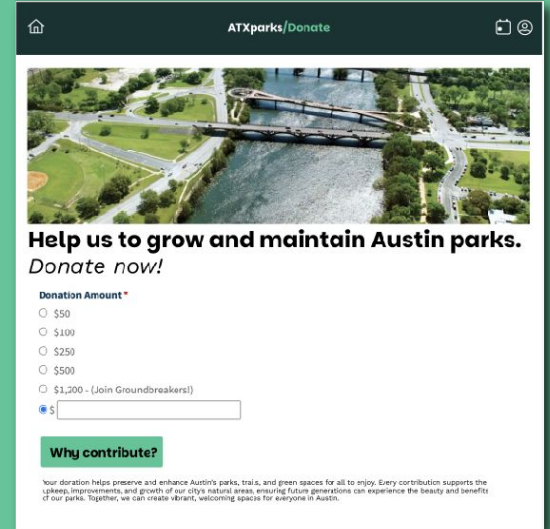
ATX Parks



Explore



Engage



Empower

Austin Parks Foundation logo | Parks | Trails | Search

Gus Fruh Trail needs your help!

When?
April 18, 2025

Where?
3505 W 35th St
Austin, TX 78703
[View on Google Maps](#)

What?
Volunteers will be girdling and cleaning up overgrowth on trail.

Back | Let's Go!

Certification required: Girdling

Back | Complete Training

Link to AustinParksFoundation?

Back | Okay

Austin Parks Foundation logo | Parks | Trails | Search

Mayfield Park needs your help!

When?
April 12, 2025

Where?
3505 W 35th St
Austin, TX 78703
[View on Google Maps](#)

What?
Volunteers will be spreading mulch on surrounding nature play exhibits.

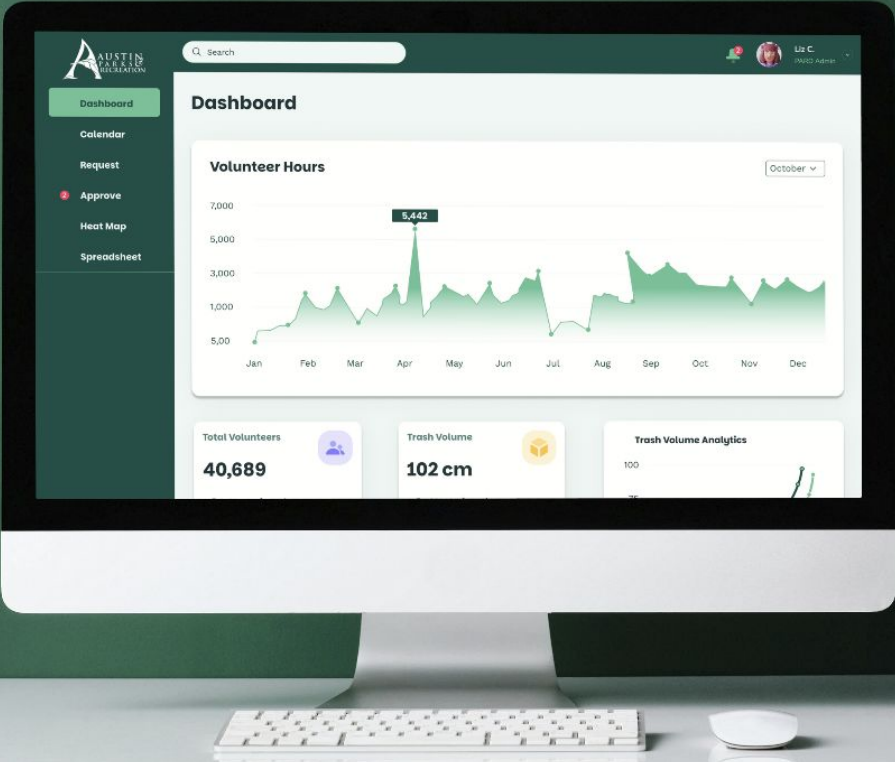
Back | Let's Go!

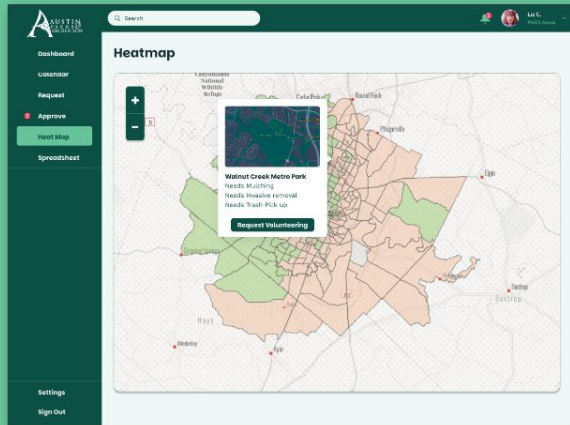


Personalized Tracking

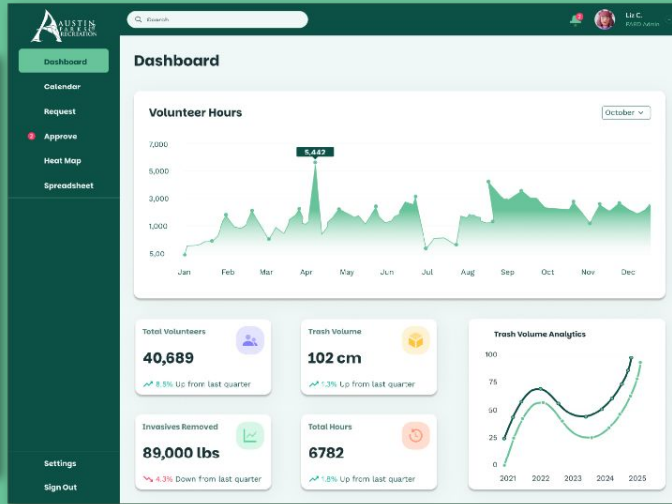
Make volunteering **Actionable for volunteers**

PARD Dashboard

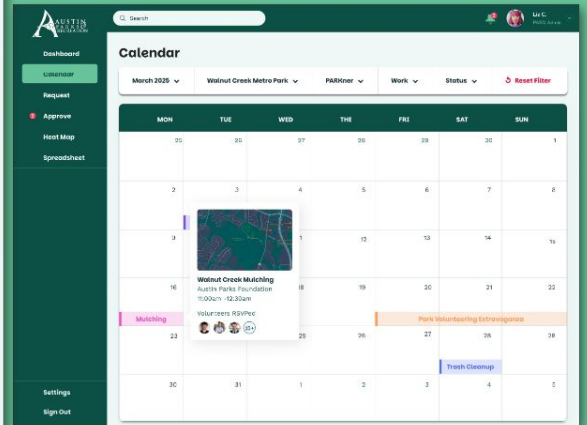




Heat Map



Data Dashboard



Calendar

Spreadsheet

ID	Park	Publisher	DATE	Work	STATUS
26789	Mayfield	Keep Austin Beautiful	04 Apr 2025	Mulching	Action needed
67280	Walnut Creek	Austin Parks Foundation	28 Mar 2025	Trash	Action needed
12067	Springwoods	Hill Country Conservancy	22 Mar 2025	Tree Pruning	In Progress
47390	Pease Park	Pease Park Conservancy	22 Feb 2025	Mulching	Approved
68383	Buder	Keep Austin Beautiful	21 Feb 2022	Invoicing	Denied
08627	Barton Springs	Barton Springs Conservancy	18 Jan 2024	Trash	Approved
82889	Maggie Sullivan	Watson Greenway	05 Jan 2024	Tree Pruning	Denied
28790	Zilser	Zilser Botanical Garden	30 Dec 2024	Tree Pruning	Completed
28804	Waller Lake	Austin Parks Foundation	09 Dec 2024	Invoicing	Completed
28804	Waller Lake	Austin Parks Foundation	09 Dec 2024	Invoicing	Completed

Spreadsheet

Event Details

67280 Walnut Creek Austin Parks Foundation 28 Mar 2025 Trash Action needed

Trash Cleanup at Walnut Creek
Austin Parks Foundation wants to pickup up trash in and around the walnut creek, CCCN nature play area.

Volunteers Expected 20 to 30
Materials Needed Trash bags, grabbers, and gloves

Approve Deny

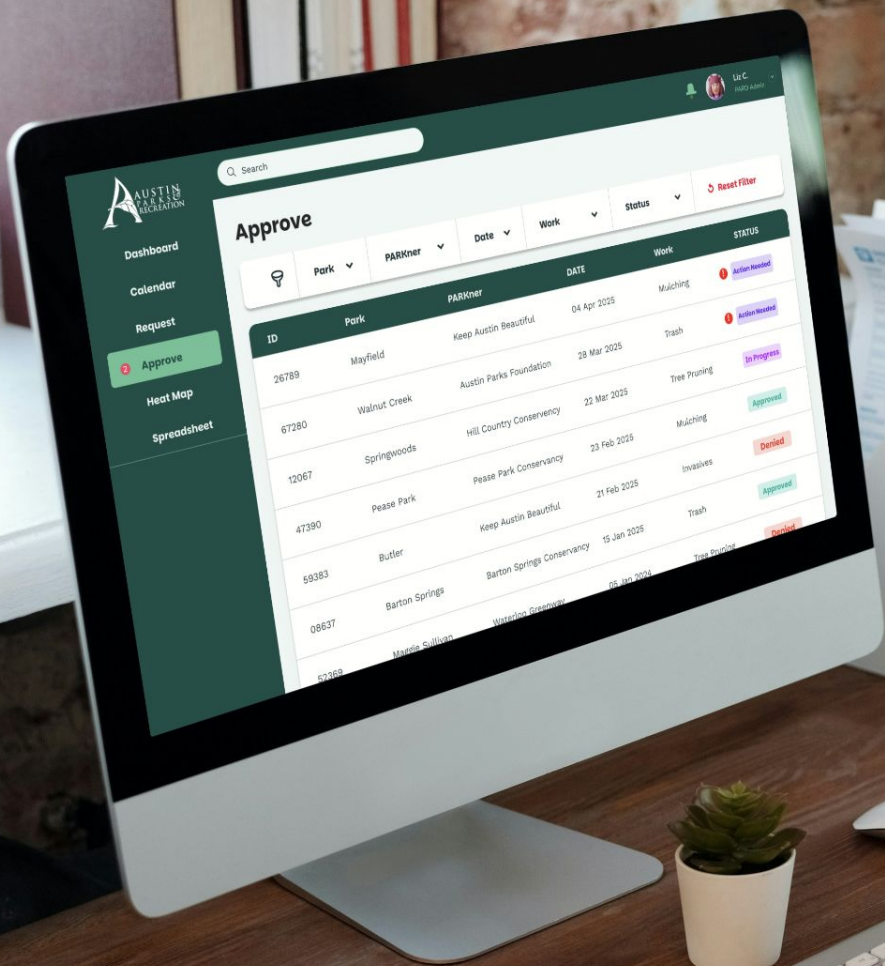
Approval

Approve

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Showing 1-09 of 78

Event Tracking



Q Search



Dashboard

Calendar

Request

Approve

Heat Map

Spreadsheet

Approve

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59383	Butler	Keep Austin Beautiful	21 Feb 2025	Invasives	Denied
08637	Barton Springs	Barton Springs Conservancy	15 Jan 2025	Trash	Approved
59269	Marlin Sullivan	Wildcat Creek	25 Jan 2024	Tree Pruning	Denied

A-frame signage



1

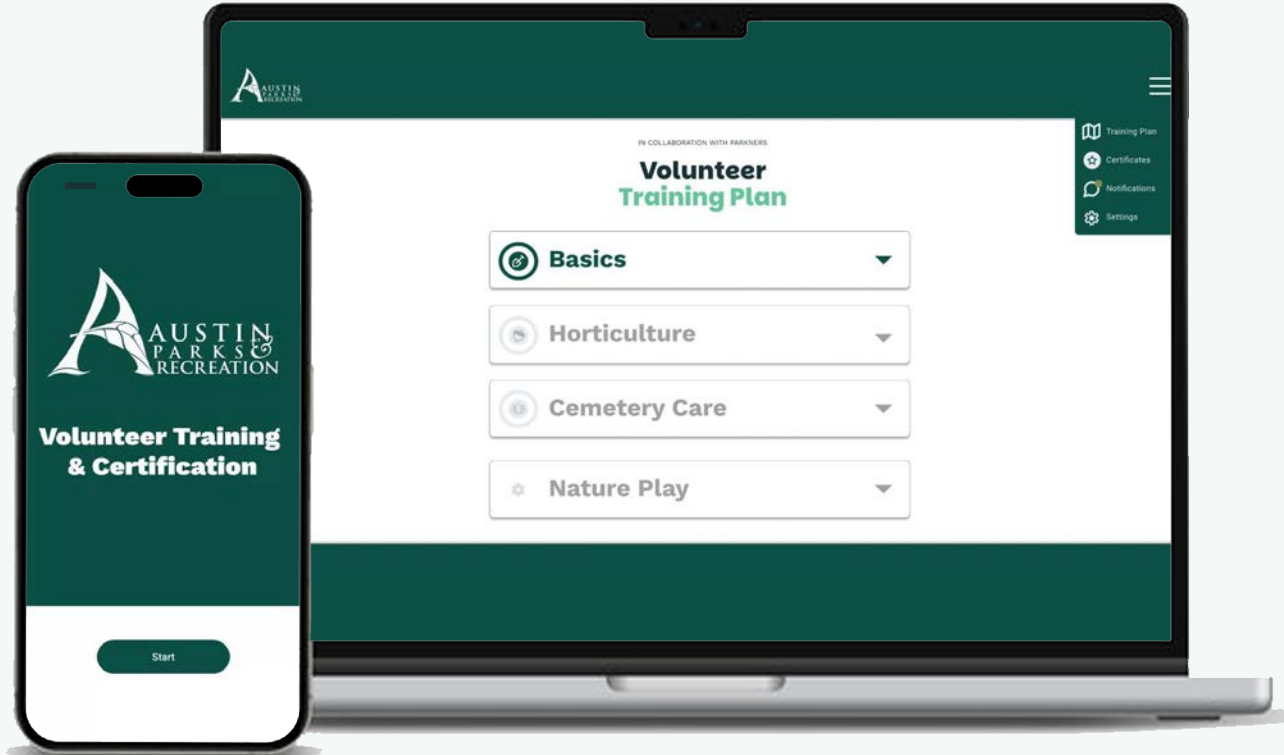


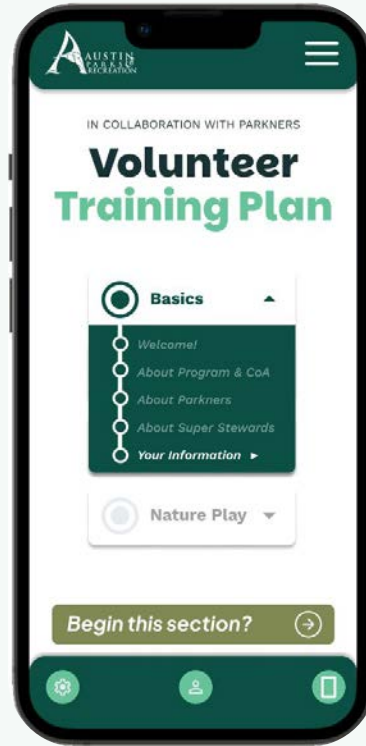
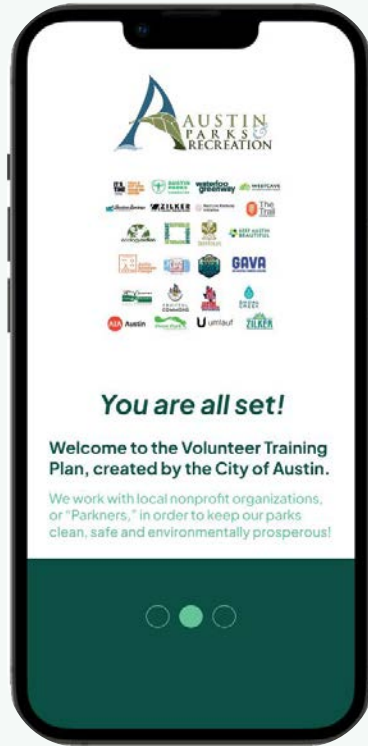
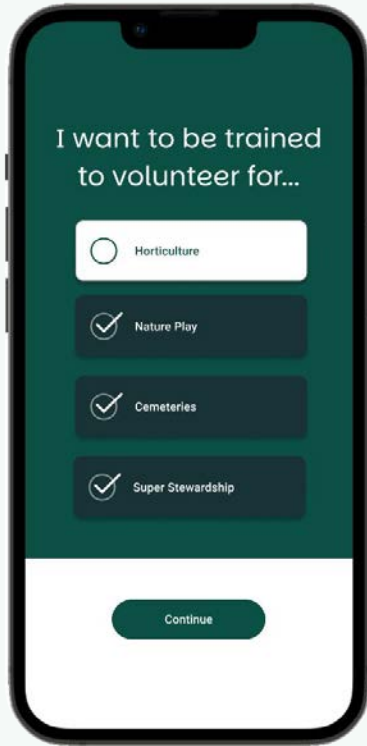
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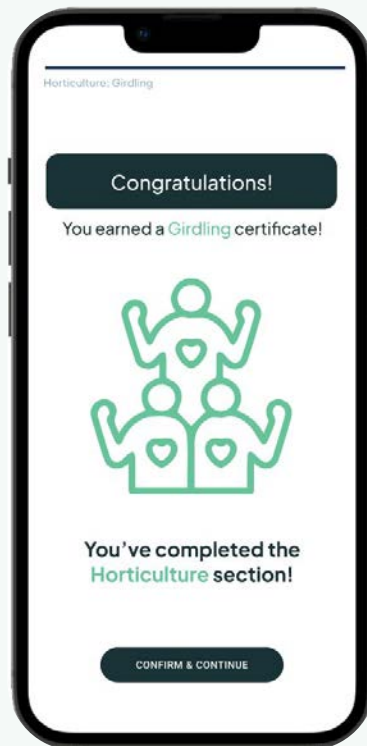
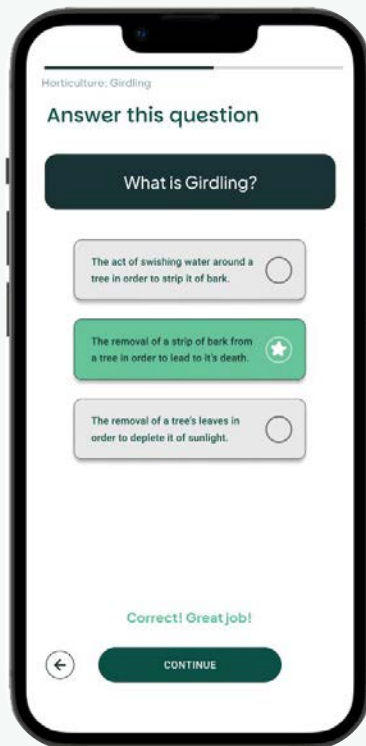
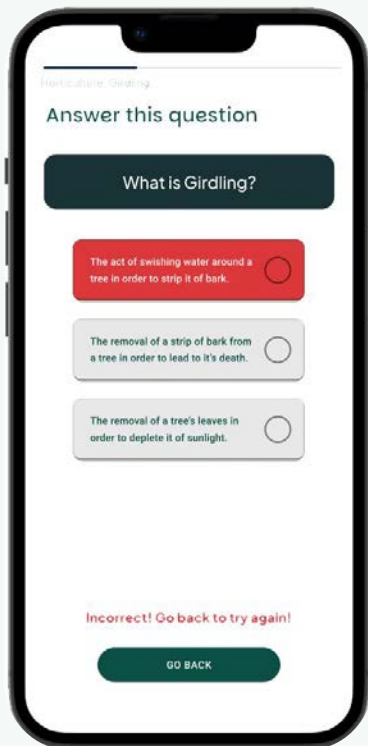
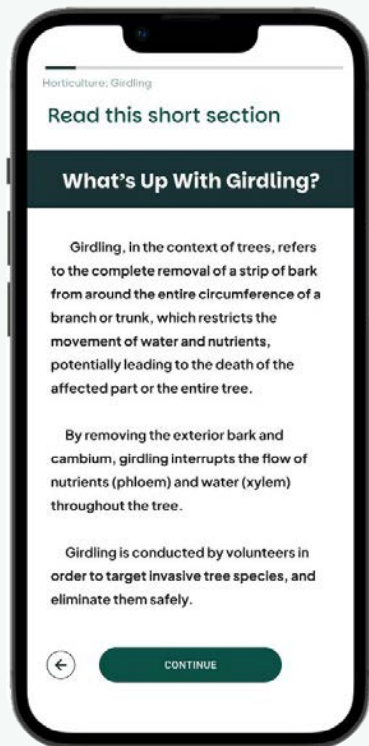


Make volunteering **Engaging for volunteers**

Volunteer Training & Online Certification







Volunteer Vests and Aprons







owdy,
knner!

want to talk about your local park?

come & take a seat!

owdy,
parkner!

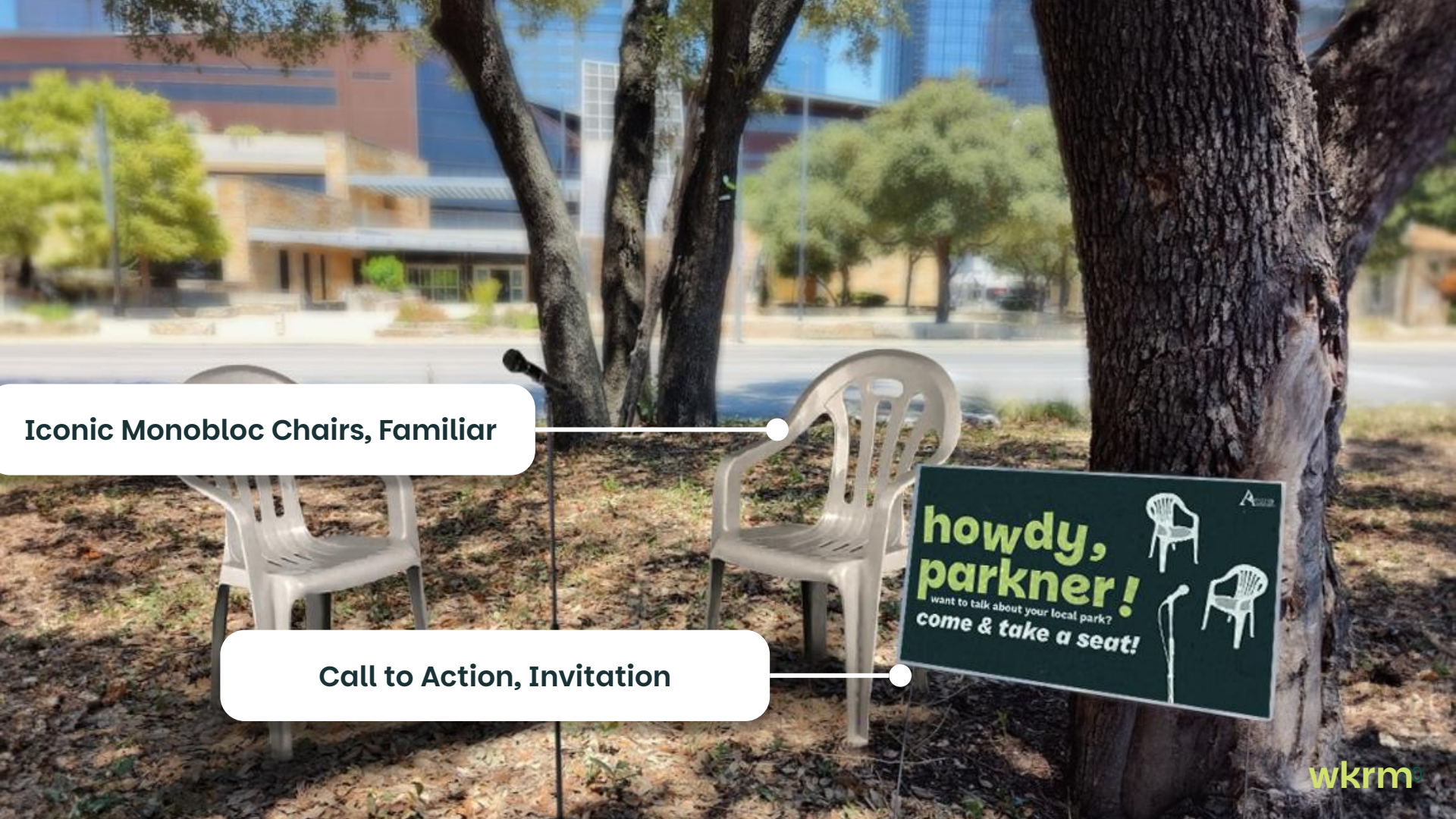
want to talk about your local park?

come & take a seat!

owdy,
parkner!

want to talk about your local park?

come & take a seat!



Iconic Monobloc Chairs, Familiar

Call to Action, Invitation

howdy,
parkner!
want to talk about your local park?
come & take a seat!

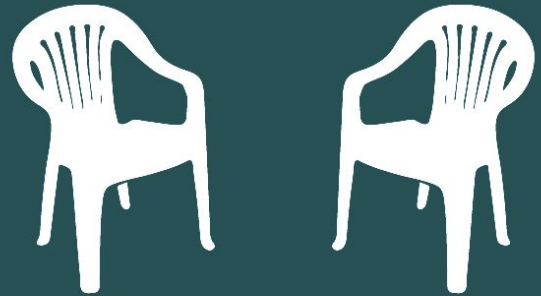
The sign features two white line-art illustrations: a chair on the left and a microphone on the right. A small 'A' logo is in the top right corner of the sign.

Sense of friendliness

Bold graphics, tuned with guidelines

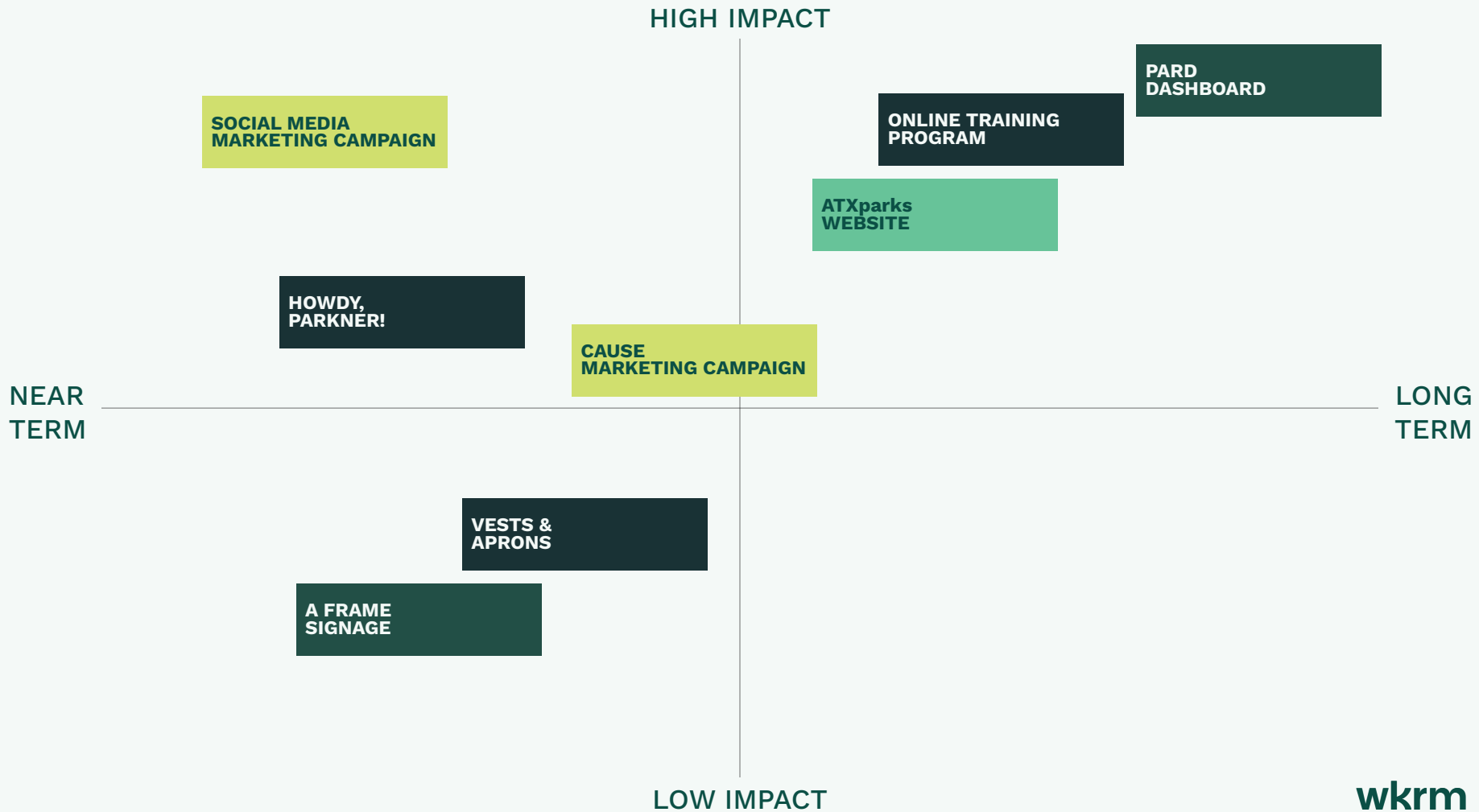
Encourages freedom of expression

howdy,
parkner!



want to talk about your local park?
come & take a seat!

What now?



Coordination

HIGH IMPACT



NEAR
TERM

LONG
TERM

Data

HIGH IMPACT



NEAR
TERM

LONG
TERM

Equity

HIGH IMPACT

**SOCIAL MEDIA
MARKETING
CAMPAIGN**

**CAUSE
MARKETING
CAMPAIGN**

**ONLINE
TRAINING
PROGRAM**

NEAR
TERM

LONG
TERM





**Further strengthen PARD's role
as a vital part of public life**

Thank You!

The University of Texas at Austin
Austin Parks and Recreation Department

wkrm