

Contact: Rachel Maher
Tel: 404-546-7969
Email: rachel@parkpride.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUNITY & PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS CELEBRATE PHASE II RENOVATIONS AT VINE CITY PARK

May 16, 2016 – Atlanta – On Thursday, May 19th, the Vine City community, Mayor Kasim Reed and several partner organizations will gather in Vine City Park at 10:30 A.M. to celebrate recent park improvements with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

The ribbon cutting marks the completion of the park's Phase II developments, which includes acquisition of additional properties doubling the size of the park and allowing for a range of new amenities. Vine City Park now provides an expanded playground, new exercise equipment and green infrastructure features, such as a rain garden, a dry creek bed and a micro-forest, as well as educational signage explaining how these features will help to mitigate the flooding caused by stormwater runoff that has historically plagued the Vine City neighborhood.

The creation of Vine City Park has been a collaborative effort from the very beginning. Community leaders determined to create a park for their neighborhood gained the support of the City of Atlanta and Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation to purchase several abandoned properties. In 2005, Park Pride began working with the community in order to transform these overgrown lots into a community greenspace. Over several months, Park Pride worked closely with the Vine City community in a collaborative process to create a conceptual master plan or "Park Vision" for the new Vine City Park.

This Vision included plans to develop the lots owned by the City into Vine City Park, and to continue to pursue the acquisition of the adjacent properties for a Phase II expansion. With the continued support of the City and the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, as well as Atlanta Renewal Community Coordinating Responsible Authority (ACoRA), the Atlanta Development Authority (now Invest Atlanta), the Waterfall Foundation and Henry Len DeFoor Trust, the community's vision came to life as Phase I of Vine City Park. As the community enjoyed the new park, they continued to push forward to achieve their vision of a larger park that would meet the needs of the community. With the help of The Conservation Fund, this dream finally became a reality as the additional properties were obtained.

"Phase II of the redevelopment of Vine City Park would not have been possible without the support of committed park advocates and community partners," said Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner, Amy Phuong. "Like other cities nationwide, the City of Atlanta's Department of Parks and Recreation's public-private partnerships are instrumental in bringing new assets and amenities online in communities like Vine City and throughout the metro area."

Working closely with both the Friends of Vine City Park and the Vine City Civic Association, collaboration from the following organizations have helped to bring the phase II park improvements to fruition: The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta Fulton County Recreation Authority, City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation, The Conservation Fund, Greening Youth Foundation, The Home Depot Foundation, Park Pride, PNC Bank, and U-Haul.

“Vine City Park represents what communities, philanthropists, nonprofits and businesses can achieve working together,” says Byron Amos, the leader of the Friends of Vine City Park.

The green infrastructure amenities included as part of this phase of development place Vine City Park in a vital position amid the revitalization efforts underway on Atlanta’s Westside. “This expansion of Vine City Park is a part of the plan set forth in the [Proctor Creek North Avenue Green Infrastructure Vision](#) to address the stormwater issues and the lack of parks and greenspace in the Vine City and English Avenue neighborhoods,” says Park Pride’s Executive Director, Michael Halicki. “Park Pride is pleased that parks with green infrastructure are being held up as a win-win solution. We see Vine City Park and neighboring Lindsay Street Park as models for future park developments across the city.”

The community-driven process that created both of these new park spaces focused on environmental, economic, and social justice outcomes that support local residents. For example, Vine City Park’s new rain garden, creek bed, and micro-forest were planted with over 620 deep rooted native plants generously provided by The Home Depot, and will help capture rainwater runoff and prevent it from reaching and overwhelming the neighborhood’s sewer system. These features were built in part by four neighborhood residents who received training and employment through Greening Youth Foundation’s Youth Conservation Corps. These layered benefits were supported in part by U-Haul and earned Vine City Park the “Parks with Purpose” designation by The Conservation Fund.

“A park is a place that brings people together, from building it, to hosting events, to simply enjoying it every day,” said The Conservation Fund’s Southeast Regional Assistant, Stacy Funderburke. “Thanks to the vision, dedication and support of all of our partners, Vine City Park and nearby Lindsay Street Park are community spaces that improve the health of the neighborhoods and quality of life for residents – they are truly Parks with Purpose.”

About Park Pride:

Founded in 1989, Park Pride is the Atlanta-based nonprofit that engages communities to activate the power of parks. Working with 90 local Friends of the Park groups, Park Pride provides leadership and services to help communities realize their dreams for neighborhood parks that support healthy people, strong neighborhoods, vibrant business districts, a robust economy and a healthy environment. Park Pride is active in greenspace advocacy and educating both civic leaders and the general public about the benefits of parks, and annually hosts the Parks and Greenspace Conference. Learn more about Park Pride at www.parkpride.org.

About The Conservation Fund:

At The Conservation Fund, we make conservation work for America. By creating solutions that make environmental and economic sense, we are redefining conservation to demonstrate its essential role in our future prosperity. Top-ranked for efficiency and effectiveness, we have worked in all 50 states since 1985 to protect more than 7.5 million acres of land. www.conservationfund.org

###