

Austin Parks and Recreation Parkland Acquisition Program

September 24, 2025



Agenda

- 2018 Bond Accomplishments
- Long-Term Goal Progress
- Impacts of HB1526
- Land Banking Benefits and Maintenance
- Goals for the 2026 Bond



2018 Bond Accomplishments

- Over **100 acres** acquired
- **6%** additional residents within walking distance of a park since 2018
- **25** new parks or park expansions
- Each land acquisition bond dollar matched with **33 cents** of Parkland Dedication Fees



Notable 2018 Bond Investments



D5+D2-Cooper
Neighborhood Park



D6+D10 Bull Creek Bluff
Neighborhood Park



D4 Jamestown
Neighborhood Park



D2 Shadywood
Neighborhood Park

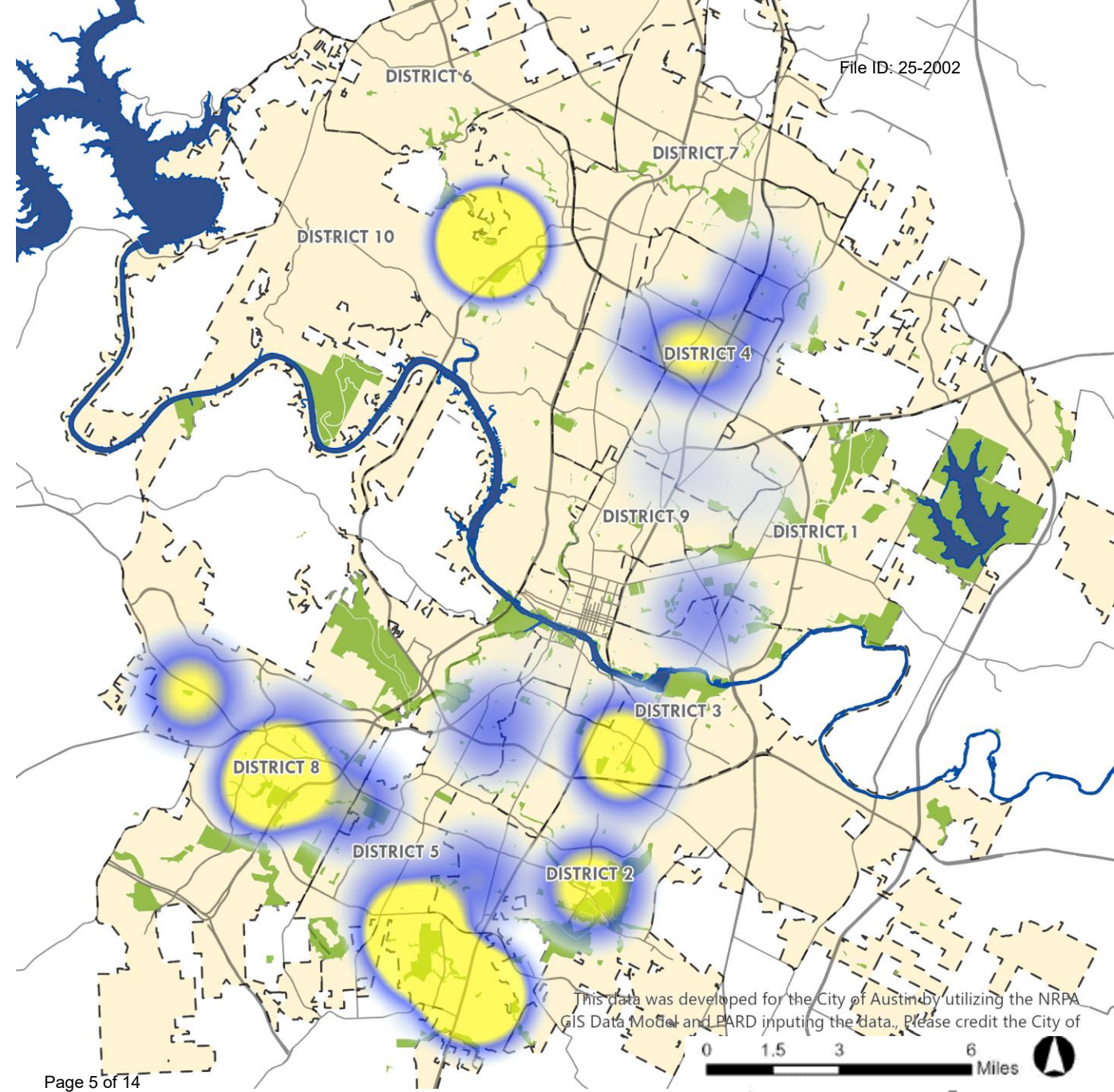
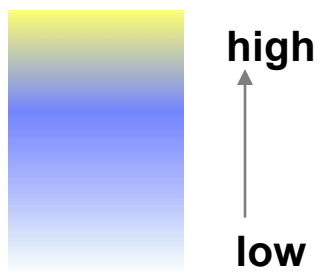


D1 College Row Pocket
Park

Land Acquisitions

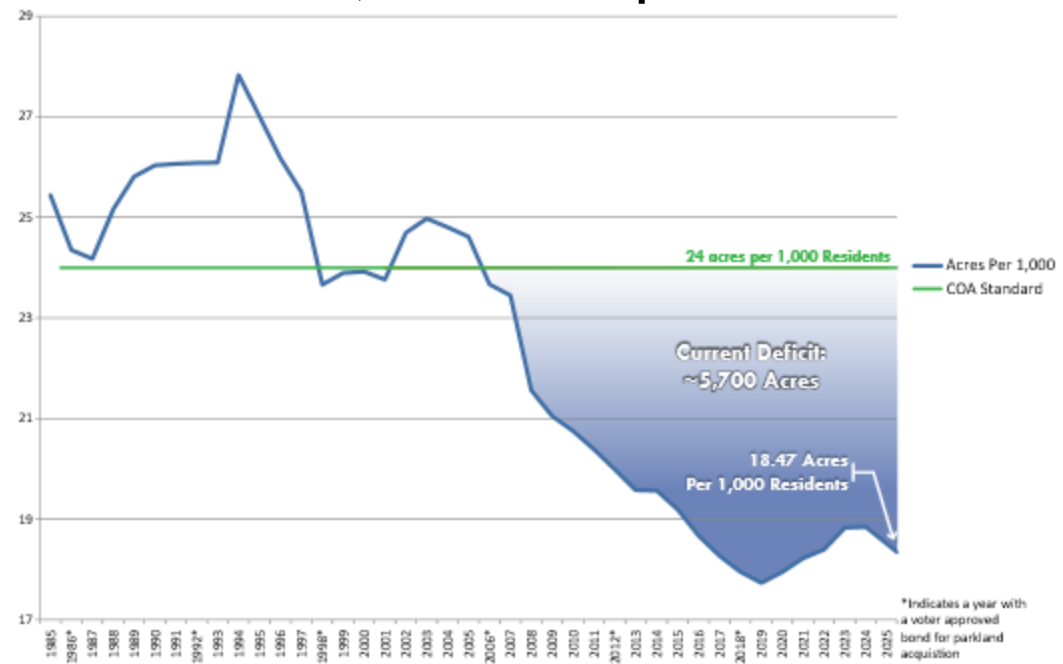
2018 Bond Investments Heatmap Completed Land Acquisitions

Concentration of acres
purchased

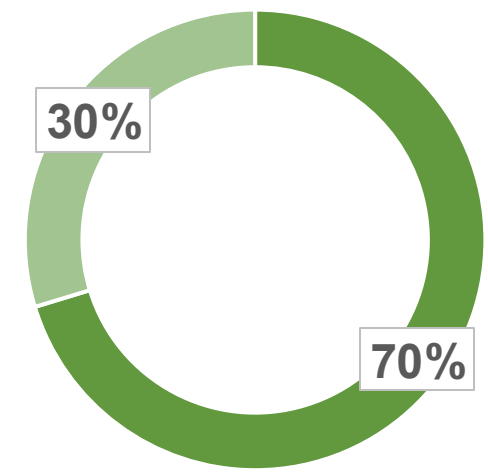


Long-Term Goal Progress

18.47 Acres of Parkland per
1,000 People



70% of Austinites within a five
to ten- Minute Walk of a Park

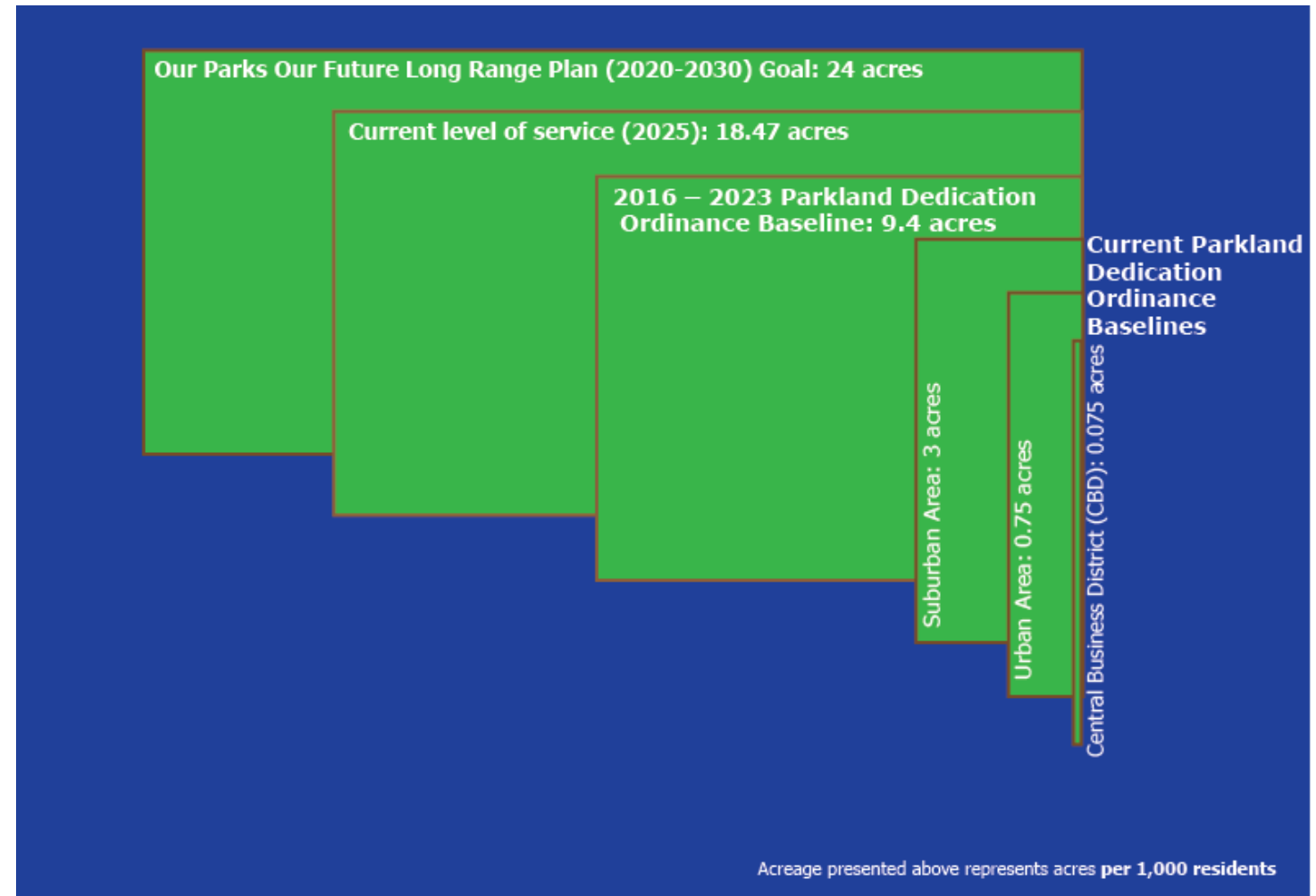


- Within 5 to 10 minute walk
- Longer than 5 to 10 minute walk



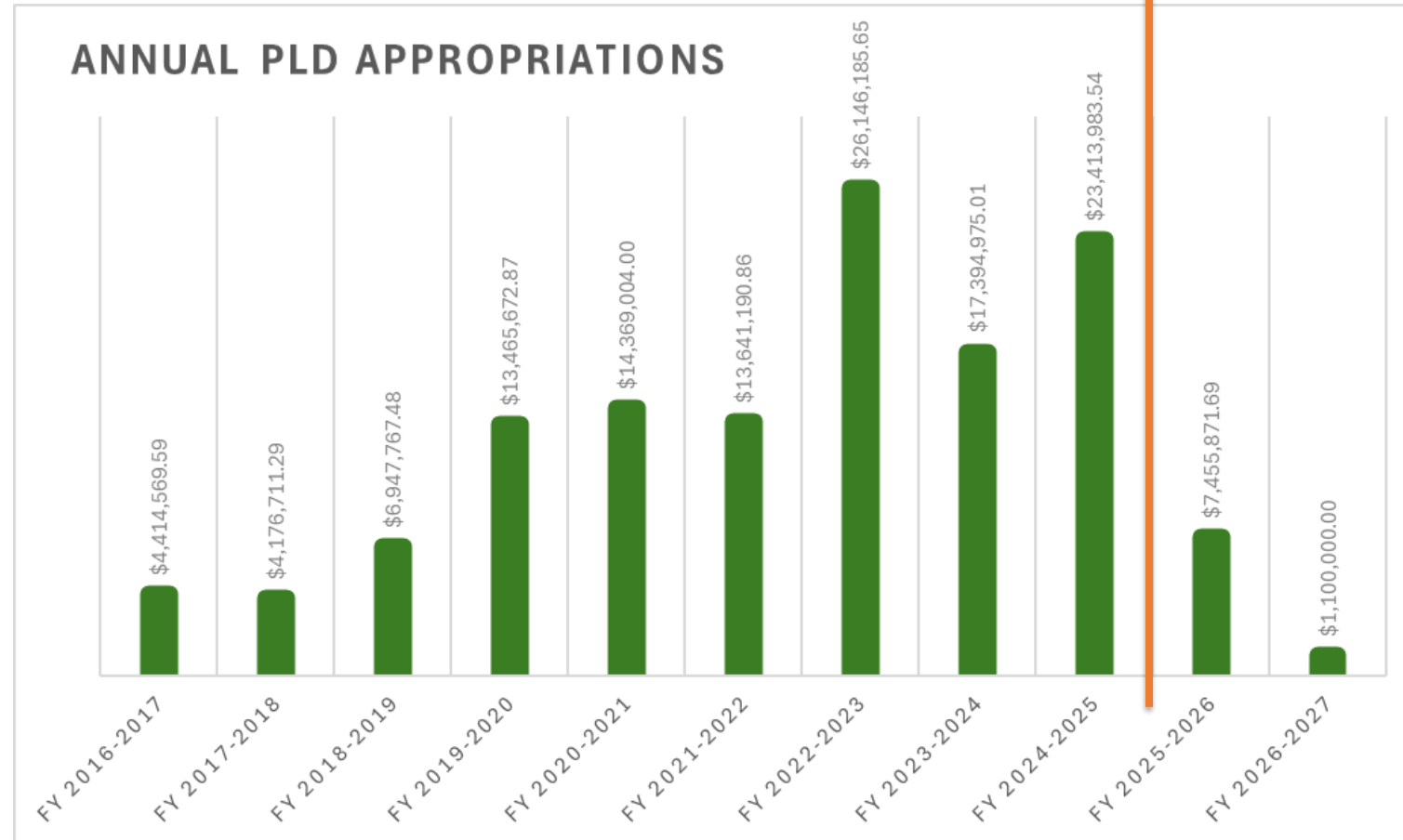
Impacts of HB1526 – Level of Service

- City-wide park service goal of 24 acres set in APR Long-Range Plan, current level of service is **18.47 acres per 1,000 residents**
- 2016 Parkland Dedication Ordinance supported **40% of that goal with 9.4 Acres/1,000 residents**
- New ordinance supports less than **12% of that goal with 0.075 - 3 acres / 1,000 residents**
- Remaining park service gap will fall on existing residents through Bonds and other funding



Impacts of HB1526 – Annual Fees

- Under the previous ordinance every dollar of bond funding spent on acquisition was matched by 33 cents from PLD
- Previous ordinance appropriated up to **\$26 million annually** for park land and development investment
- HB 1526 delays payment an average of 5 years after a permit issued
- Resulting short-term **funding gap of roughly \$15-20 million/year** for up to 5 years
- **Delayed delivery of parkland to new residents**



Land Banking Benefits

- **Land banking** allows APR to purchase land today with available funding from willing sellers and **ensures critical park connections are not lost to development pressure.**
- **Land banking saves money** by acquiring land today at a lower cost than in the future. Land banking serves as an investment and as land prices increase in Austin, **that investment pays dividends** of \$1.4 to 20+ million per park over 10 years in the form of savings to the community.
- During the time between acquisition and development, the new parkland may be maintained as a natural area that **contributes to the health of the environment** through carbon sequestration, habitat protection, water quality and flood mitigation.
- If the parcel is in a residential area, it is **maintained for public passive recreation from day one**- kicking a ball around, picnicking, hiking, bird watching, water access, etc.



Land Banking – Environmental Benefits

Carbon Sequestration

- Parks sequester **1.01 – 1.85 tons of carbon per acre per year**

Urban Cooling

- Parkland is an average **5 degrees cooler** than the rest of the city

Wildfire Fuel Reduction

- Opportunity for **enhanced land management** practices to mitigate wildfire risk

Ecological Restoration

- **Over 200 acres** of Grow Zones on Parkland

Erosion and Water Quality

- Over **10,000 acres** of critical water quality and erosion hazard zones on parkland

Passive Recreation

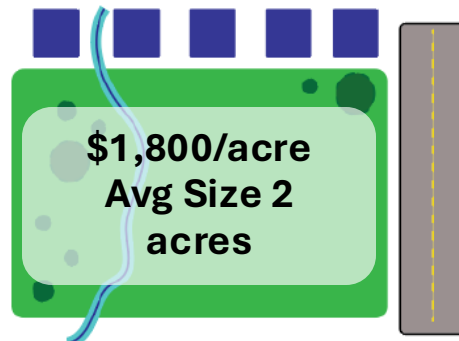
- Trails are the **most requested amenity** on parkland

Land Banking – Maintenance Costs

Buying parkland today offers the public significant savings over buying parkland in the future. After factoring in annual maintenance costs and land value appreciation*, these savings are in the millions per park over a 10-year period.

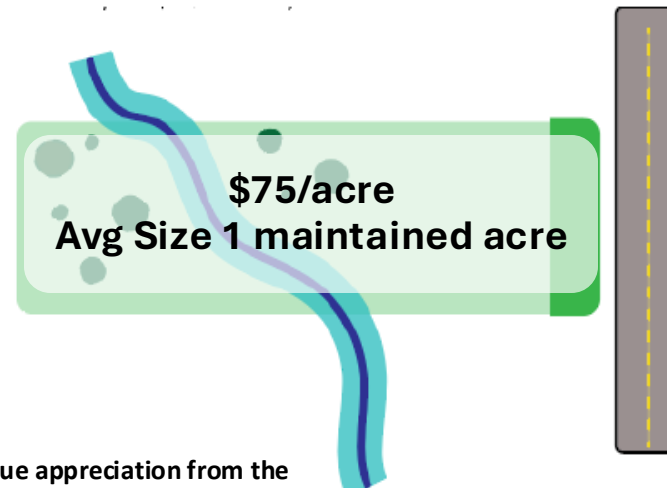
Infill parks

Mowing and litter control to match the level of maintenance of private lawns.
Savings: \$1.4 million/ 10 years



Greenbelts

Mowing is limited to areas along the street.
Remaining area is kept in its natural state and managed on a response basis.
Savings: \$4.5 million/ 10 years



Destination parks

Regular mowing limited to areas along the street and annual mowing of upland areas.
Candidate for land management plan which includes wildfire management and ecological restoration.
Savings: \$20+ million/ 10 years



Goals for 2026 bond

Infill Parks in Deficient Areas

Acquire parkland in park deficient areas throughout the city.

Recreation Center in Southeast Austin

Identify property for a district park and recreation center to serve a deficient area in Southeast Austin.

Colorado River

Acquisition of land, including publicly owned land, to dedicate as parkland to fulfill the Colorado River Corridor Vision Plan with a shared use trail.

Greenbelts and Greenway Critical Gaps

Gaps identified in trails, greenbelts and greenways that are missing key parcels; examples include Onion Creek, Williamson Creek, South Boggy Creek, Rinard Creek, Little Walnut Creek, Northern Walnut Creek and others.

One City Approach

Partner with other City departments with shared goals such as Austin Transportation and Public Works, Austin Public Library, Austin Housing, Austin Watershed Protection, Austin Water and others to remedy deficiencies and achieve multiple City goals when feasible.

Contribute to Climate Equity Plan goals

Acquire parkland in high priority areas identified for environmental value and areas of historically low park service



Anticipated 2026 Bond Impact

For every \$100,000,000 in acquisition funding, APR estimates:

- Over **200 acres** of greenbelts
- **60 acres** of destination parks
- **60 acres** of new pocket and neighborhood parks
- Additional **5-10%** of Austin served with parkland
- Every \$100 million invested in park acquisitions today, instead of in the future, **saves the public \$150 million** over the next 10 years due to land value appreciation

Thank You