

City of Atlanta, Department of  
**Parks Recreation and  
Cultural Affairs**



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## Mission

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs (DPRCA) is to provide all residents and visitors with the highest quality parks, facilities, recreational programs and cultural experiences



## Vision

To enhance the quality of life for all through nationally acclaimed excellence in Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs.



CITY OF ATLANTA

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KASIM REED  
MAYOR



Dear Residents and Visitors:

I am pleased to present the 2009 Annual Report from the City of Atlanta Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs. The Department plays a vital role in improving the quality of life in our city through a growing system of parks, revitalized recreational programming and enriching cultural experiences.

While this report documents much of what the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs has accomplished over the past year, I am most excited by what is to come. In June, I appointed, and City Council approved, George Dusenbury to serve as Commissioner. He brings years of experience with Atlanta's parks and a passion for serving our city's youth. George will help me implement the Centers of Hope and the Atlanta BeltLine, two exciting initiatives that will further solidify Atlanta's position as a world-class city.

Just six weeks after my Administration passed its first budget, we held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to re-open six recreation centers. This was just the first step in fulfilling my campaign pledge to re-open all the recreation centers by the end of the year. A \$3.7 million increase in recreational funding approved by the Atlanta City Council made this significant milestone possible and serves as a down payment for the transformation of our recreation centers into Centers of Hope for Atlanta's youth.

This year, we also completed several miles of Atlanta BeltLine trails in Southwest Atlanta, and broke ground on the Northeast trail that will connect Piedmont Park to DeKalb Avenue, achieving the Atlanta BeltLine's promise of connecting communities, parks and recreational opportunities.

Along with City Council, we are committed to providing the highest quality services and making sustainable investments in our parks, facilities and programs for current and future citizens. It is no small wonder that, for the fourth consecutive year, Atlanta received KaBoom!'s Playful City Award.

Sincerely,

Kasim Reed

## Commissioner George Dusenbury



Dear Friends and Supporters,

2009 was a challenging and rewarding year for the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs. We experienced successful facility renovations, groundbreaking for the Atlanta Beltline parks, playground openings and public art program events. The renovation projects were completed under budget and on schedule.

The Department's proudest achievement was being awarded national accreditation by the National Parks and Recreation Association. Accreditation is the highest honor that can be bestowed on a parks, recreation and cultural affairs agency and supports Mayor Reed's commitment to overall excellence in providing programs and services to the City of Atlanta.

With the national economic downturn, the Department took significant budget cuts and staff positions were eliminated in December 2008. We also reduced operating hours at our facilities and worked furlough hours, but we continued to deliver the same number of programs and serve the same number of Camp Best Friends participants. We saw an increase in park usage during the national recession when many families were staying close to home for recreational activities.

Looking forward, we are excited to be part of the Mayor's vision to transform all of our Recreation Centers into Centers of Hope. His leadership and commitment to our city's youth inspires us all. We are proud that we were able to accommodate all our large festivals in parks through the most significant drought this century. Residents and visitors continued the City of Atlanta's Memorial Day tradition when the Atlanta Jazz Festival opened for a two day festival thanks to sponsorship commitments while cities across the country were forced to cancel their Jazz Festivals.

We hope you will look through the specifics of this report. We are proud of what we have accomplished. With dedication and a passionate staff we have been able to meet the demands of residents and visitors during challenging times and we remained the "Heart and Soul of the City." We thank everyone for their support.

Sincerely,

George Dusenbury

## The Office of Recreation



Charlene Braud, Director

Since 1981, the City of Atlanta has provided safe, creative and enriching summer recreation programming to thousands of children. Camp Best Friends, summer program challenges and supports the children enrolled, offering educational opportunities, friendship, teamwork and the possibilities of excellence and achievement.

Over the summer, 3,100 campers were served at 12 day camps throughout the city. The daily curriculum offered to campers ranged from physical, social, cultural and educational components including field trips. The enrichment camps ranged from basketball, track and field, golf, therapeutics (campers with special needs and disabilities), and overnight (at our Lake Allatoona location).

The Recreation Afterschool Program (RAP) serviced at average 4,560 youth during the 2009 – 2010 Atlanta Public School year. The youth were provided with a diverse curriculum of tutorials, cultural and arts programs and a wide variety of athletic activities that include soccer, tennis, basketball, cheerleading, track and field, swimming and softball. This year the Atlanta Teen Leaders program counseled approximately 840 youth at 8 sites throughout the city.

The athletics programs showed an



increase in enrollment with more than 1,700 girls and boys registered to play on 162 basketball teams and more adult's participation in leagues for basketball, and softball.

Through partnerships with the K.I.N.G. Foundation, a non-profit organization sponsored by Grammy Award winning hip hop artist, T.I.P., 35 male campers were awarded lap tops and a certificate of completion in the leadership camp at the end of their summer journey. A partnership with the Gulfcorp Youth Action Corps and Operation Reach allowed 115, 6th through 9th graders an opportunity to make a positive impact on their northeast Atlanta community, all while learning about social justice, community diversity, and service-learning. The pre-teens created community service projects, one of which was an ongoing drive for the local homeless shelter located at Peachtree and Pines Street.



## The Office of Parks



J. Nicholas Williams, Interim Director

Since the first park acquisition, the Office of Parks has contributed enormously to the economic, environment and social well being of the city of Atlanta. The Office of parks maintains and manages approximately 3,769 acres (4% of City's land) and 209 acres at Lake Allatoona. There was an increase in park involvement from partners, friends of groups and conservancies who enabled us to maximize resources. Volunteers worked more than 30,000 hours in the parks and 50 friends of parks groups worked on park enhancements. We added 14 acres of parkland.

This year we had 465 down trees, we have taken down 682 trees, and completed 573 trimming work orders in routine and emergency services on the city's right a ways. The staff at the City's greenhouse maintains and plants all the plants for the City's parks, City Hall and public spaces located throughout the city. Over 650 reservations were managed for fields and rental spaces at the city's parks and recreational facilities.



## The Office of Park Design



Paul Taylor, Director

The Office of Park Design's Skilled Services group completed more than 1645 work orders, repairing and maintaining indoor and outdoor facilities in support of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs.

Construction started on the new Chastain Tennis Center at

Chastain Park, Zaban Recreation Center, the conversion of the Old Adamsville Gymnasium to an Emergency Shelter and significant renovations at Camp Lake Allatoona. Broke ground on three Atlanta BeltLine parks in conjunction with Atlanta BeltLine Inc.: Historic Fourth Ward Park which will be home to Atlanta's first skateboard park; multi-use fields at Boulevard Crossing Park; and DH Stanton Park in Peoplestown. Completed renovations at Arthur Langford Recreation Center and JD

Simms Recreation Center; Adams Park Concession Building & Picnic Pavilion; and installed new playgrounds at Abner Place and Jacci Fuller Parks.

Procurement of contracts for renovations at Grant Park Recreation Center and Coan Recreation Center was completed during the year, with construction scheduled to be completed by December 2010. Staff undertook master planning for Selena S. Butler Park with the assistance of the Atlanta Housing Authority. The size of Chosewood Park was doubled through the acquisition of just over six additional acres in conjunction with the Conservation Fund.

Ribbon cuttings were held for the Atlanta BeltLine Trail section from Tanyard Creek Park to Atlanta Memorial and Emma Millican Park. Staff managed the administrative office move from City Hall East to Harris Towers.



## The Office of Cultural Affairs

In 2009, Atlanta's arts and cultural community enjoyed the high quality programs and experiences offered by the City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA). Our support of the artists and art community, presentations of educational workshops and arts classes, and the promotion of cultural events remain at the core of our mission: To promote rich and diverse cultural experiences in the City of Atlanta while preserving and protecting the City's cultural heritage.

OCA provided cultural experiences to 88% of the Atlanta Public School students at 14 sites through the Cultural Experience Project. Additional educational programming for youth includes ARTSCool, Summer Mural Program, Girls Speak at South Bend Center for Art & Culture and art instruction at Chastain Arts Center.



Camille Russell Love, Director



**OCA secured the following funding:**

*\$524,000 for the Cultural Experience project \$470,000 for The Contracts for the Arts Services program to qualifying 63 artist and artist organizations \$200,000 for the renowned Atlanta Jazz Festival. The Office of Cultural Affairs is able to consistently reach members of the community through the following core programs & experiences:*



**Atlanta Cyclorama & Civil War Museum**

The Atlanta Cyclorama has continued its legacy of educating and entertaining students & visitors on Civil War history in FY 09-10 by hosting 2,021 guided tours for a total of 63,117 visitors generating \$476,351 in overall ticket and gift-shop revenue.

In addition to building alliances, increasing awareness and maintaining market position; the Atlanta Cyclorama hosted several special events and partnered with 27 community and cultural organizations. The Atlanta Cyclorama also launched four marketing campaigns: Atlanta Staycation, Backyard Adventure, Cyclorama Awareness and Summer Destination. Television and radio broadcasts on Atlanta and Company and NPR enhanced our marketing efforts and a new Cyclorama online e-commerce tool has created an additional stream of revenue for the site.



**Atlanta Jazz Festival**

The Atlanta Jazz Festival received the coveted 2009 Greener Festival Award for effective environment best practices.

**Chastain Arts Center**

Chastain Arts Center served 465 students during the 2010 youth summer camp. Children from ages four through twelve were taught traditional artistic techniques including painting, drawing, printmaking, and sculpture and art history. The artwork in the gallery and the nature of the outdoors was incorporated into their camp experience.

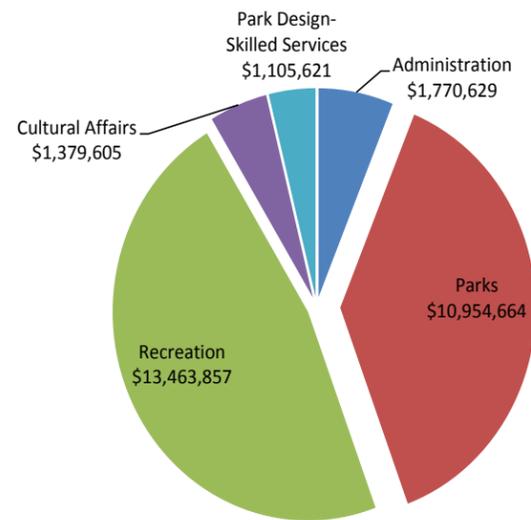
**Public Art Program**

The public art program maintained and conserved 40 artworks and 12 Temporary Arts Projects in 11 neighborhood parks.

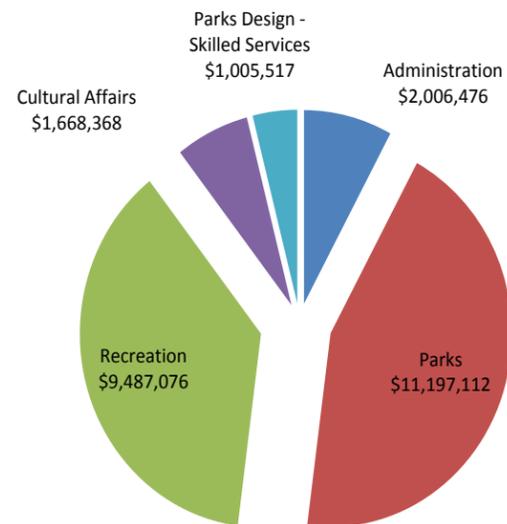
*The Atlanta Jazz Festival received the coveted 2009 Greener Festival Award for effective environment best practices.*



**2011 DPRCA TOTAL BUDGET**  
**\$28,674,376**



**2010 DPRCA TOTAL BUDGET**  
**\$28,364,549**



**The Atlanta Civic Center**

The Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center is one of Atlanta's most popular venues for the major performing arts and entertainment events. In 2009, the Civic Center was one of only two sites in the United States to host the international exhibit "Diana: A Celebration". The Civic Center consistently attracts clients and patrons for comedy shows and concerts, financial seminars, college and high school graduations. Having become the home for the BET Hip Hop Award show, the Civic Center is set to host more than 110 days of events during the 2010 fiscal year.



*Ann Marie Moraitakis, Director*



## Atlanta Sustainability Initiatives

### Greenspace and Recreation Plan

Atlanta's Project Green space establishes a framework for a citywide system of high quality open spaces consisting of parks, natural areas, outdoor gathering spaces, and connecting greenways, streetscapes, and trails. This system is essential to Atlanta's quality of life, economy, environment, and sense of community. There is broad consensus among Atlanta's residents regarding the importance of green space resources. As a vital and integral part of the City's fabric, green space must be accessible to all citizens, provide a focus for community life, and perform vital environmental (e.g., natural resource habitat) and social (e.g., recreation and gathering places) functions.

The Atlanta, Parks, Open Space, and Greenways Plan was completed in October 2009 and adopted by City Council in December 2009. This plan outlines a procedure for the City to grow its green space, manage that green space, and build capacity.

Although this plan is comprehensive and specific, not much has been done due to low staffing and resources. Both the Planning and Parks departments have come up with lists to start implementing goals, yet the resources are not in place to make this happen on a wide scale.

### Community Gardens in City Parks

There are currently 18 community gardens (with one pending) located within City of Atlanta parks. These gardens are on public land, but constructed and run by the communities.

Park Pride, a non-profit organization, provides funding for the gardens through a grant from the Kendeda fund for construction of the gardens. Community members collect membership dues which provide funding toward maintenance and upkeep, but community members can also apply for grants through Park Pride for capital improvements.

### Rainwater Capture for Irrigation in Atlanta Parks

A cistern underneath Gordon White Park captures rainwater that helps to maintain the park's landscape. The City of Atlanta and Park Pride has installed 10 rainwater harvesting systems to support the community gardens. These systems include education materials about the rain water harvesting program.

### Civic Center Upgrades to HVAC system and other retrofits

The Atlanta Civic Center is currently undergoing a series of improvements to its infrastructure to become more energy efficient. These upgrades include a rehaul of the HVAC system,

replacement of lighting and lighting controls, and other recommended capital improvements, as determined by an energy audit of the facility. These upgrades are being completed under the Energy Savings Performance Contract, funded by the federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant, and executed in partnership with the Division of Sustainability.

### Xeriscaping & native planting on grounds & parks

The City uses xeriscaping in its parks and on its grounds as much as possible. Xeriscape landscaping involves all of the following principles: good planning and design, soil analysis, selection of suitable plant materials, creation of practical turf areas, only the most efficient irrigation methods, proper use of mulches, and appropriate maintenance.

Benefits of Xeriscape landscaping include reduced water use, decreased energy use (less pumping and treatment required), reduced heating and cooling costs because of carefully placed trees, decreased storm water and irrigation runoff, less yard waste, increased habitat for plants and animals, and lower labor and maintenance costs.

### LED Lighting in traffic lights & outdoor lights

The city is converting much of its indoor and outdoor lighting to LED lighting, which often uses up to 80% less energy. This includes outdoor lighting in parks.

### The LEED Building Pilot Project in Piedmont Park

In Piedmont Park, the new pool house has been constructed to LEED Silver standards. Also, LEED certified restrooms have been constructed, in partnership with Piedmont Park Conservancy.



## **Kasim Reed**

*Mayor, City Council members, & Leadership*

### **ATLANTA CITY COUNCIL**

#### **Hon. Ceasar Mitchell**

*President*

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Hon. Joyce Sheperd	District 12
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Hon. Aaron Watson	Post 2 At Large
Hon. H. Lamar Willis	Post 3 At Large

#### **George Dusenbury**

*Commissioner*

Paul Taylor, Office of Park Design Director  
J. Nicholas Williams, Office of Parks Director (Interim)  
Camille Russell Love, Office of Cultural Affairs Director  
Charlene Braud, Office of Recreation Director  
Ann Marie Moraitakis, The Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center

*Design: Powell Design*