



WE ARE PARKS
2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

YEAR IN REVIEW

Providence Parks: A Year of Innovation, Expertise, and Impact

The Parks Department had a remarkably successful and productive year, characterized by innovation, expertise, efficiency and resourcefulness. We are deeply grateful to Mayor Brett P. Smiley, Chief Operations Officer Courtney Hawkins, City Council President Rachel Miller, the City Council and other City Departments whose support allowed us to leverage resources and make a meaningful impact in every neighborhood.

Through strategic partnerships, we designed and managed numerous large-scale projects to completion. Major accomplishments include the revitalization of India Point Park's waterfront, the completion of the Woony Adventure Park and Pavilion with custom skate/ride features, the replacement of the Downtown Rink and infrastructure for the upcoming installation of the iconic Shade Sail. We also completed full renovations at Paul Grande, Paterson and Brassil Parks, restored the Prospect Terrace retaining wall, and added artistic lighting to the Roger Williams Memorial. Other significant projects included upgrades at Lippitt Park with a new mist cooling feature and the expansion of the skateboard park and playground at Neutaconkanut Park. Several projects are currently underway including full renovation at General Street Park, new waterparks at Obadiah Field and India Point Park playground.

In addition to these large projects, we undertook a series of smaller, yet impactful improvements. These included repairs to five basketball courts, new fencing at six parks, a new toddler play area at Brown Street Park, outdoor fitness areas at Roger Williams Park Gateway and Donigian Park, and the completion of a futsal field at Conlan Junior Park, along with a new softball field at Collyer Park Field.

Artistic enhancements from both local and nationally recognized artists enriched our parks. Noteworthy installations included a ceramic triptych mural in Memorial Park by ChromaCouncil, a mural at Brassil Park by Slick and Smick, the Waterplace Park Tunnel lighting feature with Downtown Providence Parks Network, and the artistic installation at the Cypress Street/Billy Taylor Park bridge was created in collaboration with The Steel Yard, Ysanel Torres, and Brandon Rose. Nine benches repurposed from wind turbines were installed along the riverwalk, one painted by our Landscape Designer, Addie Newbold, and another by Ohio-based artist Debra Sue Solecki. Additionally, we completed the 9th Street Park "My HomeCourt" project with artist Sanford Biggers. We are grateful to the Arts, Culture and Tourism Department for their participation and guidance.

Roger Williams Park has undergone substantial enhancements. The Museum of Natural History and Planetarium received critical updates, such as improved event spaces, upgraded restrooms, foyer renovations, and exterior enhancements. Additionally, the Botanical Center saw significant landscaping and hardscaping improvements at the Pavilion. Environmental initiatives like the Treatment Train and Floating Island at Polo Lake also

boosted our sustainability efforts.

Operationally, our Neighborhood Parks and Maintenance teams worked collaboratively to restore lighting, repair historic structures, and enhance landscaping across parks, improving their overall curb appeal. A notable achievement was the in-house expansion of the play space at Burnside Park, which resulted in significant cost savings while providing more recreational opportunities for children. Our proactive teams also ensured that all waterparks opened early for the warm weather, earning positive feedback from the public on park maintenance. The Forestry Department launched a new apprenticeship program in partnership with 1033 and managed an unprecedented number of storm-related tree emergencies.

Thanks to innovative collaborations, we expanded our impact through biodiversity and sustainability initiatives, including "low-mow" and "no-mow" programs, leaving the leaves, and promoting urban meadow growth. The addition of a dedicated graphic designer further enabled us to respond swiftly to signage needs and enhance communication efforts.

Our venues and programs once again saw increased attendance. North Burial Ground attracted over 1,000 visitors, new landmark events were hosted at the Botanical Center and the Museum saw record-breaking attendance. We also expanded summer and after-school meal programs, along with our Urban Wildlife Partnership, PlayCorps, and Fitness-in-the-Parks programs. The RWP Gateway continues to serve as a community hub for Roger Williams Park and surrounding neighborhoods, while the Rhode Island Philharmonic Pops concert at the park drew record crowds.

On the national and international stage, Providence Parks received recognition through participation in the Harvard Bloomberg Institute, the Connecting Families to Nature Network and the Brown University Conference on Health and Nature. Parks also celebrated the 10th Anniversary of our USFWS Providence Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership. Locally, we hosted our first all-teams professional development Park Conference, "All Hands In – Everyone Has a Hand in Making Great Parks," and co-sponsored the RI Stormwater Innovation Conference. We were honored with the Providence Preservation Juror's prize for the Betsey Williams Cottage Sycamore Tree for Legacy Tree Conservation. The Gateway Center's growing impact was also recognized with several prestigious awards in 2024.

As we close out 2024, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Board of Park Commissioners, Mayor Smiley, the Providence City Council, our City colleagues and our community partners. Their support and collaboration have been instrumental in enhancing our operations and creating spaces that enrich the lives of our neighbors across all Providence neighborhoods.

We are proud. We are Parks!

Wendy Nilsson, Superintendent



The Board of Park Commissioners from left to right: Commissioner Justin Holland, Council President Pro-Tempore Juan M. Pichardo, Commissioner Sara McConnell, Chairman Mayor Brett P. Smiley, Commissioner Randall Rice, Councilor Sue R. AnderBois, Commissioner Elizabeth Gordon-Martin, Superintendent Wendy Nilsson





Mission

Providence Parks are a vital component of our healthy, inclusive and thriving community. Through our Parks Department we aim to provide the city residents with inspiring outdoor spaces that dramatically impact the quality of life within each neighborhood. It is our belief that all residents should have access to a public park that is safe, brings community together and encourages our youth to play, learn and explore. By working in collaboration with local friend-groups, we will work to support the needs of each neighborhood and provide programming that is reflective of the children, adults and staff that use these spaces daily.

Goals & Priorities

1. Nature and Environmental Stewardship

- Adaptive and Resilient Design: Focus on adaptive shorelines, stormwater mitigation, habitat preservation, and invasive-plant management to enhance climate resiliency.
- Tree Canopy Expansion: Increase the City's tree canopy to improve urban ecosystems.
- Biodiversity & Ecological Health: Integrate biodiversity and ecological habitats into park design and maintenance.
- Chemical-Free Parks: Maintain parks without the use of harmful chemicals to protect both people and nature.
- Preservation of Natural Spaces: Safeguard open and natural spaces for future generations.

2. Accessibility and Inclusivity

- ADA Accessibility: Improve ADA access to ensure inclusion and belonging across all parks and facilities.
- Safe & Welcoming Spaces: Create spaces that meet the needs of Providence's distinct and diverse neighborhoods, fostering a sense of safety and community.

3. Community Engagement and Responsiveness

- Community-Centered Approach: Stay responsive to the evolving needs and interests of the community.
- Connecting People to Nature: Strengthen connections between children, families, and nature through inspiring, shared spaces that build stronger communities.

4. Recreation and Innovation

- Outdoor Recreation: Enhance outdoor recreation opportunities with innovative, sustainable, and responsive parks, facilities, and programs.
- Multigenerational Engagement: Develop facilities and programs suitable for all ages, from traditional sports to alternative forms of recreation.
- Promoting Healthy Risk-Taking: Encourage activities that support healthy risk-taking and personal growth.

OPERATIONS

The Parks Department manages 123 outdoor spaces, including traditional parks, athletic fields, basketball courts, playgrounds, conservation areas, walking/running tracks and trails, non-traditional recreation areas (like skateboard features, bike tracks, and parkour), dog parks, cemeteries, an ice rink and the flagship Roger Williams Park. We also care for all park and street trees, and participate in the City's snow removal efforts.

Our operations team are dedicated and skilled park professionals and technicians, collaborating to ensure efficient and effective maintenance across all spaces. This effort is supported by robust training and professional development programs.

The "Parks Academy" training program marked its 6th year, with courses such as Certified Playground Safety Inspection, completed by nine managers and supervisors. Other topics included Nexus training for

community engagement, Reasonable Suspicion for CDL driver managers, WorkZone Safety, Lead Safe, and OSHA 10 certifications. We also launched the Forestry Tree Trimmer Apprenticeship Program with two new crew members. Additional training focused on customer service, a three-day racial equity workshop for city leadership, and the 2024 Summer Equity Foundations & Skills Workshop Series at the RWP Gateway.

This year, we introduced the Parks Department All Hands In Conference, a department-wide event focused on skill-sharing, training, and team building. As in previous years, our managers and crews engaged in a variety of additional trainings aimed at improving their ability to efficiently manage work, track assets and maintain inventories. These ongoing efforts ensure our team remains responsive and well-equipped to meet the growing demands of park operations across the City.



Maintenance

In 2024, our Maintenance team completed 350 work orders per month, managing the upkeep of irrigation systems, fountains, waterparks, concession buildings, electrical and HVAC systems, signage, playgrounds, and 26 buildings. The team also handled PVD 311 and other constituent directed requests. Changes in management practices yielded a positive work environment where staff take pride in their work and give 100% every day. Major projects the Maintenance team completed in 2024 include:

- Installation of new lighting on the Grand Stairway at City Center Rink.
- Installation of 8 new lights in Joe Williams Park walkway.
- Installation of 10 new parking lot lights at Tim O'Neil Park.
- Installation of WIFI controller at Burnside Park.
- Repair of JT Owens Park concessions roof.
- Painting of ornamental fence at Prospect Terrace, porch at Casino (including interior/exterior windows) and handball wall at Corliss Park.
- Paver installation at Botanical Pavilion and cobble and cement repairs at WaterPlace Park.
- Installation of soccer goals and netting at Obadiah Brown Field and Drummond Field.
- Demolition and removal of building in Burnside Park as well as fabrication of fence and relocation of rolling maintenance gate.
- Installation of 9 repurposed wind turbine benches in downtown waterfront parks.
- Completion of bench restoration at Freeman Park.
- Site work for new fitness area at RWP and new play features at Brown Street Park.
- Disassembly and removal of Neutaconkanut Park playground equipment and amenities to prepare for new installation.
- Upgrades to Japanese Garden filtration system.



Parks team teaching about the inner workings of our water parks at the first annual Parks Department Conference

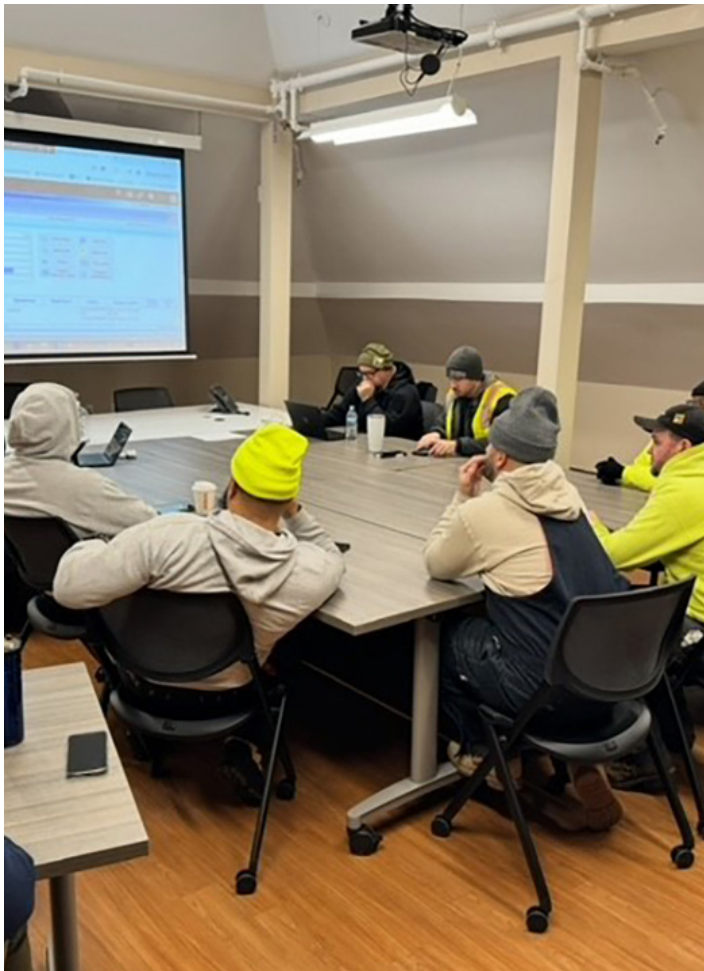
Neighborhood Parks Services

Our Neighborhood Parks and Roger Williams Park crews are dedicated to ensuring our parks remain clean, safe and welcoming. These teams maintain 123 park spaces across the city, with each crew overseeing more than 20 parks.

Our waste management system is a critical part of this effort. Each park has at least one trash barrel, with some parks having up to thirty. Our crews empty over 1,000 barrels weekly in a well-coordinated rotation.

The Ballfield Crew cares for 37 infields and one of the largest artificial turf fields in Providence. NPS/RWP crews also spread over 720 yards of Engineered Fibar Mulch—8 tractor-trailer loads—across 54 playgrounds.

This year, employees participated in a highly informative Parks Conference and attended training in CDL, Customer Service, Hoisting, Pruning and other areas to enhance their skills.



Our teams also assist with winter operations, helping plow in Ward 8 and all of Ward 9, including Roger Williams Park. After snow and ice events, they clear sidewalks across the city, including the Michael Van Leesten Bridge and pathways throughout and surrounding our parks.

Additionally, crews supported Art, Culture, and Tourism by setting up and removing neighborhood Christmas trees. They also responded to citywide graffiti removal calls and removed tons of debris caused by storm surges at India Point Park, Gano Park, and Blackstone Park.

Our dedicated crews ensure our parks remain clean, safe and beautiful for all.



Forestry

The Providence Forestry Division had a highly successful year, enhancing the city's green infrastructure with expertise and innovation. This year, the Forestry Division maintained over 31,000 street trees and thousands more in parks and on other City properties. These trees captured 1,638,466 pounds of CO₂, intercepted over 20 million gallons of rainfall, and absorbed 6 million gallons of stormwater, reducing flooding and property damage. In addition, they contributed to energy savings of approximately \$1,000,000 through shading and wind interception, helping to cool and heat homes more efficiently.

In collaboration with the Providence Neighborhood Planting Program (PNPP), we planted 532 trees and engaged over 100 volunteers in planting and tree care. Our Young Tree Maintenance Program continued to thrive, teaching residents how to care for young trees through pruning and mulching.

The Forestry Division also launched a Tree Trimmer Apprentice Program with Local 1033, offering valuable hands-on experience in arboriculture for current Parks employees. Our Block Pruning Program completed its annual cycle, pruning 566 street trees, including 97 significant trees requiring specialized care. This effort also supported updates to our internal GIS tree tracking system.



Over 2,500 service requests were managed this year, addressing pruning, tree removals and storm debris cleanup throughout the city.

A major highlight was the creation of the Urban Wood Waste Facility on Salem Street, which recycles wood waste for use in parks and public projects, while also providing woodchips and composting services to residents.

Additionally, the Forestry Division helped coordinate the city's holiday tree events at the downtown ice rink and City Hall, ensuring the success of these beloved seasonal traditions.

Thanks to the collective efforts of the City administration, the Parks Department and the Forestry Division, Providence earned the Tree City USA award for the 37th consecutive year, continuing our legacy as one of the longest-running recipients.

In-house trees pruned: 579
In-house dead trees removed: 172
In-house storm debris handled: 179
Yards of wood chips delivered: 190

Forestry operations meeting



Professional Development & Training

This year, the Parks team participated in a variety of important training programs to enhance our skills and knowledge. These included Active Threat training, Zoo Emergency Response, Asset Essentials and EvM, Bloodborne Pathogens, and Certified Playground Safety Inspector certification. The team also completed Chainsaw Safety, Conflict Management, and Corajus - a coalition for Racial Justice. Additionally, we engaged in Equity Foundations training, which focused on racial equity, and also took part in the Forestry Apprenticeship Program. Other training included Lead Safety, Mental Health - A Guide for Managers and Leaders, Nexus Community Engagement, and OSHA 10 certification. The team also participated in the PEMA Emergency Response Team training, Reasonable Suspicion for CDL Managers, Snow Plow Skills (DPW), Time and Task Management, Work Zone Safety training, and many more!

Superintendent Wendy Nilsson and Deputy Superintendent Brian Byrnes speak at the first annual Parks Department Conference (Photos of various training sessions from conference follow)





Parks team participating in Certified Playground Safety Inspection Training

Parks Partners & Affiliates

The Parks Department partners on several public/private/non-profit ventures located in our parks and venues.

Providence River Boat

Providence River Boat and Providence Kayak relocated from the Providence Marina to Dyer Street Landing in Harborside Park, transforming the area into a lively, welcoming space that attracts thousands of locals, tourists, and convention attendees. This successful partnership with the Parks Department, along with collaborations with stakeholders such as P3 and the Downtown Improvement District, has enhanced river access, provided engaging programming, and created a clean, safe environment for neighbors, businesses, and visitors alike. In its 33rd season, Providence River Boat expanded its tour schedule and events, collaborating with local businesses and nonprofits, including the Rhode Island Audubon Society and Gooseneck Vineyards. Special events like free boat rides during Wicked Walk and tours for Providence Recreation campers were highlights, along with Riverwalk clean-ups.

Providence Kayak has gained visibility with its centrally located docks, hosting groups from local schools, nonprofits, and Providence Recreation. In 2025, plans include expanding rentals with more equipment, additional days, and longer hours. Both companies will continue to build public-private partnerships and increase waterfront activity, providing greater public access in collaboration with Providence Parks.

The Community Boating Center

The Community Boating Center (CBC), located adjacent to India Point Park since 1994, is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing sailing and paddling instruction and affordable access to Providence residents. CBC offers a variety of summer and after-school programs, along with “Sailorships” (scholarships) for children who might otherwise not have the resources or access to sailing. The center plays a key role in enhancing India Point Park as a valued community resource and works closely with the Providence Parks Department.

Key highlights included the award of 30 youth scholarships and 10 group scholarships, the offering of Summer Camp & STEM activities for youth, and the provision of affordable adult sailing memberships and lessons. CBC also completed a waterfront deck replacement to support events and programs. Through its outreach programs, CBC reached over 375 children in 2024, fostering teamwork and respect. Its EcoAdventure and Learn to Sail camps for ages 8-16 focused on sailing, paddling, and environmental education, promoting leadership and self-reliance. In addition, CBC offers affordable adult sailing options and

facility rentals, while maintaining a fleet of over sixty boats. A new project with Providence Parks will create transient dock space to attract boaters to the waterfront.

Triggs Memorial Golf Course

Over the past two years, operator FCG Associates, the operator of Triggs Memorial Golf Course, in partnership with the Providence Parks Department, has worked to enhance the lives of City of Providence communities, focusing on children and young adults through golf programs. FCG collaborates with several local agencies and schools, including the Providence Recreation Department, Button Hole Short Course, Mount Pleasant and Classical High Schools, Achievement First School, Brown University, Providence College, The Right Course Foundation, and PGA of America.

FCG offers free instruction, coaching, lessons, equipment, “play days,” and mentoring to Providence youth. Programs are led by Robert Tramonti, Triggs PGA Director of Instruction, with assistance from Tom Connor, retired Providence teacher and coach. To date, over 650 hours of instruction have been provided, with 1,900 combined rounds of golf played and more than \$2,500 in equipment distributed. Plans for 2025 include expanding these programs and developing competitive golf teams at Mount Pleasant and Hope High Schools.

Providence Tennis Academy

Located in the heart of Roger Williams Park, the Providence Tennis Academy has solidified its reputation as a premier National Training Center for adult and junior players of all levels.

ONE LOVE PROVIDENCE, our signature program running annually from May to June, offers free tennis sessions for all Providence youth ages 5–17. This six-week program, held at the Providence Tennis Center in Roger Williams Park, introduces young players to the sport while fostering community engagement and athletic growth.

La Gondola – Boating Concession in Roger Williams Park

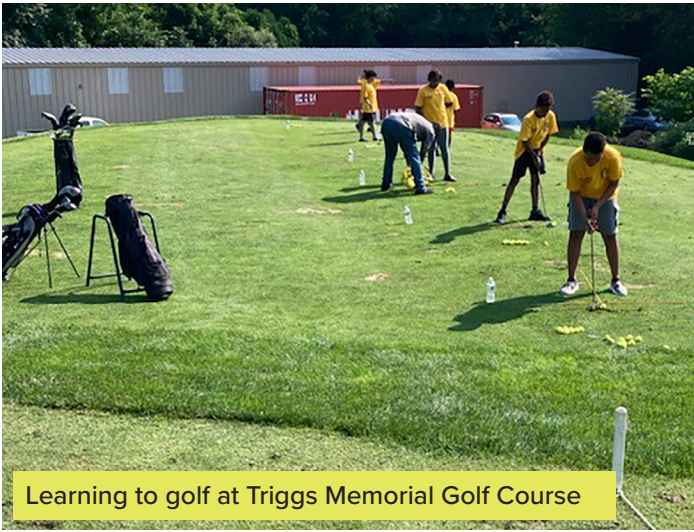
La Gondola continues to enhance recreation opportunities at Roger Williams Park, offering swan paddleboats, electric boat, and kayak rentals. Seasonal favorites, such as the illuminated swan paddleboat rides and pirate boat rides, remain a highlight for visitors. Looking ahead, La Gondola plans to open the Boathouse Café in Spring 2025 at the Clark Dalrymple Boathouse dock, expanding amenities for park-goers.

Subway – Food and Beverage Concession

Subway was recently awarded a new five-year contract to continue providing high-quality food and concessions at the Providence Rink and downtown Providence. This partnership ensures consistent, accessible, and reliable dining options for visitors enjoying these popular community spaces year-round.



Kayaking at the Community Boating Center



Learning to golf at Triggs Memorial Golf Course



We are grateful to the Parks team and all the tremendous organizations that partner with us to amplify resources and make amazing park spaces possible:

- All of the volunteers who participated in service days
- All our corresponding City of Providence Departments
- Bailey Elementary School
- Blackstone Parks Conservancy
- College Hill Neighborhood Association
- Department of Corrections
- Downtown Providence Parks Network
- Federal Hill Commerce Association
- Friends of Adrian Hall Way
- Friends of Bell Street Park
- Friends of Brassil Memorial Park
- Friends of Brown St. Playground
- Friends of Cabral Park
- Friends of Gano St. Park
- Friends of India Point Park
- Friends of J. P. Hassett Sr. Park
- Friends of Lippitt Memorial Park
- Friends of Locust Grove Cemetery
- Friends of Mattie Smith Totlot
- Friends of Peace and Plenty Park
- Friends of Paterson Park
- Friends of Warren Street Park
- Jacqueline Clements Park Community
- Mary Fogarty School
- Mt Hope Neighborhood Association
- My HomeCourt
- Neutaconkanut Hill Conservancy
- Partnership for Providence Parks
- Perennial Planters
- Providence Community Libraries
- Providence neighborhood associations
- Providence Preservation Society
- Providence Public Building Authority
- Providence Stormwater Innovation Center
- Reservoir Triangle Neighborhood Association
- Rhode Island Latino Arts
- Rhode Island Master Gardeners
- RWP Conservancy
- Summit Neighborhood Association
- The Audubon Society
- The Avenue Concept
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Wild Place
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- West Broadway Neighborhood Association
- Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The Parks Design Team continued to grow and thrive in 2024 with the addition of two landscape design staff members, a full-time graphic designer, and the return of our summer intern. These new additions allowed us to make significant strides in both production and design innovation for our park spaces. Our division remains committed to integrating sustainability and climate resiliency into our projects, ensuring that our work not only benefits city residents but also contributes to the preservation and expansion of local habitats, supporting our regional ecology.

In line with these goals, several park improvements featured beautiful and whimsical murals and installations created by local artists, each with narrative themes celebrating neighborhoods as well as pre-colonial flora and fauna. Additionally, we installed benches designed and repurposed from wind turbine blades, two of which were adorned with original artwork, further enhancing our parks' aesthetic appeal and sustainability efforts.

Several team members had the opportunity to present their expertise at notable industry events, including the Rhode Island chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (RIASLA) Coastal Resiliency Resources and Initiatives in the Ocean State event, as well as at the Boston chapter of ASLA (BSLA) Field Day Climate Action Lighting Talks. We also celebrated significant milestones, including the 10th anniversary of the Providence Urban Wildlife Conservation Partnership and the 5th anniversary of the Providence Urban Bird Treaty Program, where we presented boards showcasing our work in urban habitat creation.

Working with the community to plan a better Miguel Luna Park



Please join Mayor Brett P. Smiley, Councilwoman Ana Vargas and Providence Parks Department

For the **Neutaconkanut Skatepark Expansion**

Ribbon Cutting

Monday, July 29
5:30-6:30PM
899 Plainfield Street,
Providence, RI 02909

*Parking available in Recreation Center parking lot

Please join Mayor Brett P. Smiley, Councilman John Goncalves and Providence Parks Department

FOR THE PATERSON STREET PARK RIBBON CUTTING

WEDNESDAY JULY 31
4:15PM

69 Paterson St,
Providence, RI 02906

Design & Project Management

25 Major Projects completed: \$14,027,577.89

- Billy Taylor Park Fencing & Bridge Art Installation – **\$45,000.00**
- Brassil Park Playground & Mural – **\$528,926.41**
- Brown Street Park 2 – 5-Year-Old Play Area – **\$30,410.30**
- Burnside Imagination Center Removal & Grounds Expansion – **\$45,000.00**
- Conlan Junior Futsal Field – **\$246,135.91**
- Donigian Park Playground & Fitness – **\$151,800.00**
- India Point Park Promenade & Playground – **\$2,227,302.33**
- Joslin Basketball Court – **\$6,000**
- Lippitt Park (Play, Mist Feature, Trees, Benches, Lighting & Walkways) – **\$349,451.40**
- Memorial Park Art Installation – **\$64,450.65**
- Memorial Tunnel Lighting Installation & Improvements – **\$147,013.67**
- Neutaconkanut Skatepark – **\$655,400.00**
- Ninth Street Courts – **\$96,462.77**
- Park Fencing at Multiple Parks – **\$263,700.00**
- Paterson Park & Playground – **\$700,000.00**
- Paul Grande Park & Playground – **\$835,750.00**
- Prospect Terrace Renovations – **\$410,000.00**
- Providence Rink Infrastructure, Cold Floor & Chiller – **\$3,701,504.13**
- Riverwalk Canvas Benches – **\$35,000.00**
- RWP Botanical Center (3 Season Event Center Site Improvements) – **\$722,722.00**
- RWP Gateway Adult Fitness – **\$49,138.76**
- RWP Museum of Natural History & Planetarium Interior Renovations – **\$853,035.00**
- RWP Stormwater Treatment Train – **\$885,507.48**
- Woony Adventure Park Upper Pavilion & 2 Skate Features – **\$977,866.28**

Also under construction, but not complete: \$2,518,543.00

- City Center Shade Sail – **\$700,000.00**
- General Street Park & Waterpark – **\$662,120.00**
- Neutaconkanut Playground – **\$807,223.00**
- Obadiah Waterpark & Irrigation – **\$349,200.00**



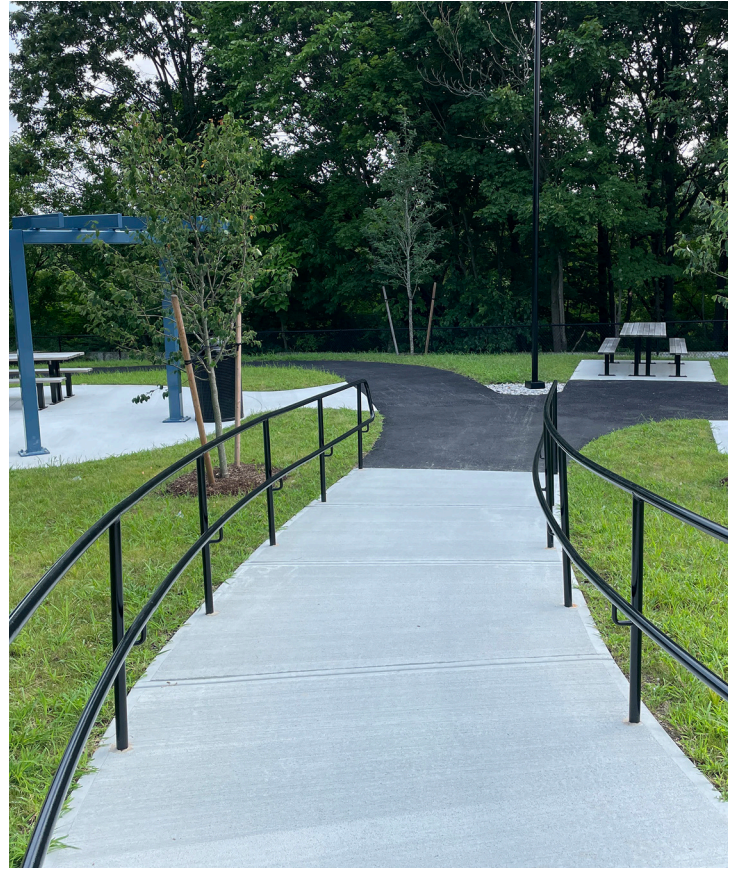
Carolyn F. Brassil Memorial Park



Prospect Terrace Renovations



Woony Adventure Park Phase II



**Woony Adventure
Bike & Skate Features**



Lippitt Park Improvements



Paterson Park & Playground



India Point Park Promenade



Paul Grande Park & Playground



RWP Gateway Adult Fitness



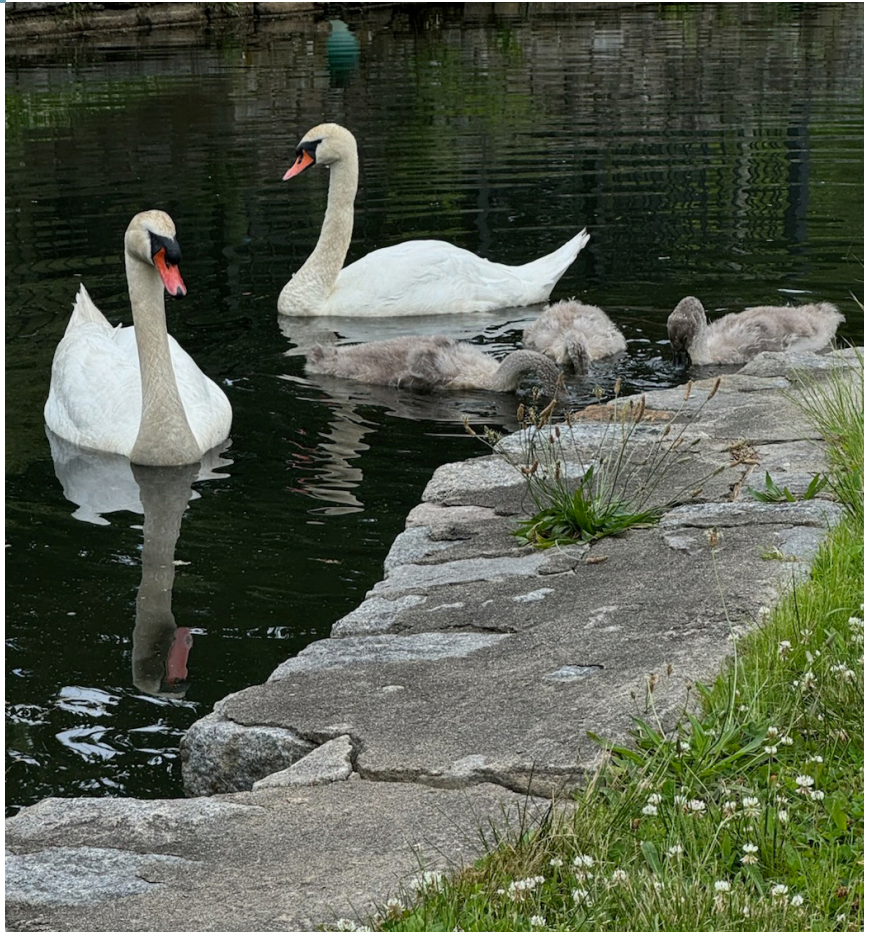
Holiday lights and displays throughout Roger Williams Park created by our Parks team and community partners



ROGER WILLIAMS PARK

The Parks Department achieved remarkable progress in capital improvements at Roger Williams Park this year, completing several major projects that enhanced both infrastructure and programming. Highlights include the restoration of the Museum of Natural History, which received updates to the Planetarium, restrooms, foyer, exhibit halls, grand staircase, gift shop, exterior doors, and lighting. The Botanical Center team made significant upgrades to the Pavilion Grounds in collaboration with the Palmieri Family Foundation and the Roger Williams Park Conservancy. Additional advancements included the installation of a new stormwater treatment system, funded by a generous grant from the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank. Moreover, the Casino's front porch was renovated, and a spacious new fitness center was added to the RWP Gateway.

We were excited to continue our successful partnership with the Rhode Island Foundation and the Department of Art, Culture, and Tourism in hosting the 7th Annual Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra's Pops in the Park. We also co-hosted the Rain Harvest Festival and the Rhode Island Stormwater Innovation Expo, collaborating with several public partners. In addition, we expanded our offerings of free fitness classes and summer meals, ensuring even greater community access to healthy activities. Through our ongoing partnership with the Roger Williams Park Conservancy, we were able to enhance public programs, including signature events such as FirstWorks Concerts, Movies in the Park, the Hello Fall Festival, and more. We also took pride in co-hosting the



Installation of RWP Stormwater Treatment Train

Roger Williams Park Zoo

In 2024, the Roger Williams Park Zoo team achieved significant professional milestones. Zookeeper Tom Anderson completed the AZA Population Management I course in January and was selected as the AZA Binturong Regional Studbook Keeper. Animal Records Manager, Karin Schwartz, PhD, joined the AZA SAFE Cheetah Steering Committee, while Chief Zoological Officer Amy Roberts was elected to the AZA Giraffe Species Survival Plan management group.

The Zoo's educational programs also gained recognition. The RWP Zoo Teacher Institute was celebrated at the 10th Anniversary of the Providence Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership in February. On March 6, the Zoo received a state legislative grant for Zoomobile outreach to Title I schools, thanks to Representative Julie Casimiro and 24 other cosponsors.

Roger Williams Park Zoo was named one of the Best STEM Summer Camps in Providence by SummerCamps.com in April. Director of Education, Andrea Stein, joined the Advisory Board for JSEC High School in Providence, expanding the Zoo's educational impact.

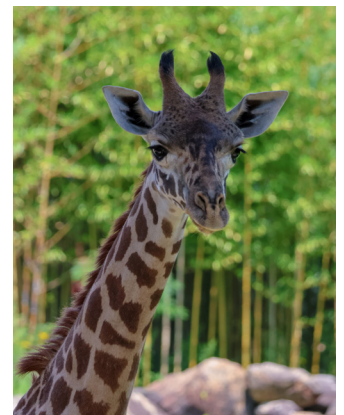
Leadership also stood out this year, with Lead Zookeeper Brett Haskins elected to the Board of Directors for the Elephant Manager's Association in July. Brett presented at the EMA annual conference in September on elephant environmental enrichment and traveled to Nepal in November for the third time, coaching elephant mahouts through the Katie Adamson Conservation Fund.

This year, Roger Williams Park Zoo welcomed several

new additions and celebrated successful births. A one-year-old male Masai giraffe arrived in May as part of a Species Survival Plan recommendation. By July, the zoo's turkey flock grew to at least four birds in the pronghorn habitat, thanks to the addition of one tom from another zoo and two hens from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. Our previously solitary turkey is also occasionally joined by wild turkeys living in Roger Williams Park.

The zoo also accepted 12 eastern box turtles confiscated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in May at LAX. Additionally, the zoo saw the birth of a golden lion tamarin female on August 29 and a two-toed sloth, sex undetermined, on September 8. A Matschie's tree kangaroo was born on June 13, 2024, and emerged from its mother's pouch in November. In another conservation success, over 50 New England cottontail rabbits were born in 2024, with 14 sent for wild release in Maine and New Hampshire in August, following three rounds of breeding with the assistance of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Roger Williams Park Zoo also introduced several exciting new features this year. On March 22, Mayor Brett Smiley officially opened the state-of-the-art red panda exhibit. In May, the zoo unveiled the new serval habitat and African aviaries, enhancing the African-themed section of the zoo. The Farmyard also saw improvements, with the opening of the "Hoofstock Heights" goat climbing structure in July and the installation of new shade over the sheep pen, providing both comfort and enrichment for the animals.



RWP Gateway Center

In 2024, the Roger Williams Park Gateway Center continued to grow as a vital community hub, strengthening its connection between surrounding neighborhoods and the many offerings of Roger Williams Park and the Broad Street corridor. With a focus on engagement, collaboration and service, the Gateway Center welcomed thousands of visitors, providing a space for people to connect, learn, and participate in a variety of programs and events. The Center saw a remarkable increase in foot traffic, with nearly 8,000 more individual visits compared to the previous year, reflecting its growing role as a key resource in the community.

Central to the Gateway Center's success was its strong network of partnerships with local and regional organizations. In 2024, the Center hosted nearly 100 diverse events, collaborating with groups such as Rhode Island Latino Arts, the African Alliance of Rhode Island, ACT (Artists' Collective Theater), Southside Smoothies, MUSE Foundation, Youth Empowerment Society of Providence County, Esperanza Hope, the Providence Recreation Department, Wheeler School, Johnson & Wales University, the Providence Streets Coalition, the Department of People & Culture, Culture Fest RI, The Empowerment Factory, DesignxRI, Quisqueya in Action, the Roger Williams Park Conservancy, Mount Hope High School, and Groundworks Rhode Island. These partnerships brought a wide range of activities to the Gateway Center, from arts and culture programs to educational initiatives, fostering a deeper sense of community and connection among diverse groups.

Among the signature events held at the Gateway Center was The Empowerment Factory: Art in the Park Summer Program, which brought together 20-25 families each week for arts and crafts, storytelling, and educational activities in a family-friendly setting. This program quickly became a community favorite, fostering creativity and connection. The Gateway Center also hosted its second annual Halloween Bash in partnership with RWP Partners, which attracted over 400 attendees. This safe, festive event provided families with entertainment, activities, and treats, offering a fun alternative to traditional trick-or-treating.

In addition to events, the Gateway Center facilitated numerous important community meetings and workshops throughout the year. In 2024, it hosted 65 meetings for various divisions of the Parks Department and two meetings with Mayor Smiley and the Neighborhood

Association. The Center also provided seven workshops focused on diversity in partnership with the Department of People & Culture, along with 201 recurring free workshops for the community, which offered educational opportunities for personal development and creative expression. The Gateway Center further supported the community by hosting 11 event rentals throughout the year, providing space for community organizations, private events, and meetings aligned with its mission of service and engagement.

The Gateway Center's growing impact was recognized with several prestigious awards in 2024. It was acknowledged by the State of Rhode Island for its dedication to public service and community engagement, by the City of Cranston for its collaborative efforts with regional organizations, and by U.S. Congress (Rep. Gabe Amo) for its commitment to community development, inclusion, and education. These honors reflect the hard work and dedication of all involved in making the Gateway Center an essential resource for the Providence community.

As we look ahead to 2025, the Gateway Center remains committed to expanding its programs and deepening its community ties. Continuing to serve as a space where people can gather, learn, and grow, the Gateway Center will play a vital role in the ongoing development of Providence's neighborhoods and beyond.





Gateway Center Halloween Bash



Community Wellness Event



Painting Class



The New Chapter "Noche de Adoracion"

RWP Botanical Center

This year, the Lakeside Pavilion construction was completed, including the installation of an ADA-compliant path, a new entrance and an expanded patio area. These updates provide additional space to accommodate events for up to 200 people.

For the first time, the Center's horticultural summer gardens now feature irrigation, a sustainable initiative that improves plant health, conserves water and reduces evapotranspiration. In addition, staff and volunteers planted over 2,500 plants throughout the Park and Center, enhancing the beauty and biodiversity of the space.

The Center also saw significant staff expansion, hiring several part-time team members. This includes three horticulturists, a dedicated marketing and merchandising specialist, educators focused on both adult and children's programming, and a special events supervisor. This staffing boost is aimed at enhancing the Center's programs and strengthening its role as a key player in the event industry.

The Center updated its special event fee schedule for the first time in ten years, which has allowed for increased programming, contributing to a rise in visitor numbers.

Visitor engagement also saw growth, with new interactive exhibits such as Gnomevember, wreath-making workshops, train displays, and a visitor experience kiosk. This helped attract 31,260 visitors, with the largest increase coming from families with young children (26%). Family memberships accounted for 15% of new memberships, and 10% of those were from active military families. This growth can be attributed to a focus on preschool programming and family-themed activities like Wee One Wednesdays and Family Goat Outings. Additionally, 10 new family-themed programs were introduced to the Center's regular programming.

Partnerships were key to the Center's success this year, with notable collaborations in programming, education, and exhibits. For example, RI PBS won an Emmy for their coverage of the "All Aboard for the Holidays" exhibit. Other partners such as Brown, JWU, URI, Harvest Cycle, and MET School helped create interpretive programs in art, education, fitness, and workforce development. In total, 32 partners contributed to educational and community-focused programming at the Center.

In 2024, the Roger Williams Park Botanical Center provided a range of educational opportunities for students and

adults, including 26 youth field trips and 7 adult tours. More than 675 students and 120 adults participated in structured educational activities, many of which were offered at low or no cost.

Volunteer engagement also saw improvement with the addition of a new volunteer coordinator. This led to a 26% increase in new volunteers, bringing the total to 175, who contributed 7,488 hours. Volunteer activities included orientations, training on topics like invasive plant management and plant care, and social events to build community among volunteers. The volunteer program is expected to grow further, with 210 applications currently being processed.

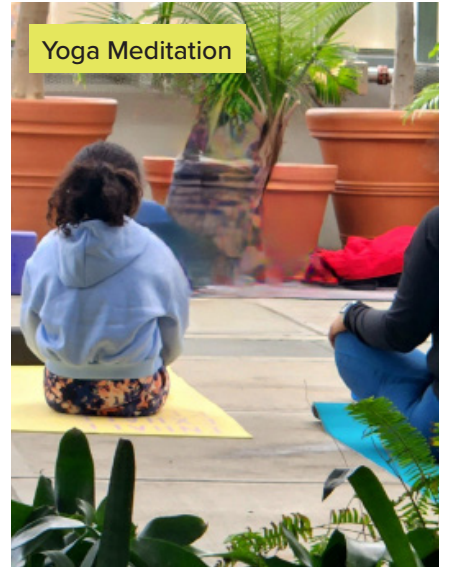
For the fourth consecutive year, the Center participated in the Newport Flower Show, which attracts 31,000 visitors annually. The Center's exhibit, focused on environmental sustainability, native plants, and pollinator habitats, won first place in its category and was the only exhibit dedicated to educating homeowners on an ecosystem-first approach to garden design and maintenance.



Wee One Wednesdays



Yoga Meditation



Museum of Natural History & Planetarium

The Museum of Natural History and Planetarium continued to grow as a premier local and regional destination for education and discovery. Despite undergoing major renovations that required public closures, the Museum welcomed 27,230 visitors, including school children and attendees of special programs. These renovations, aimed at enhancing the visitor experience, also provided new opportunities for programming and events. During the closures, the Museum extended its reach by bringing programming directly to the community.

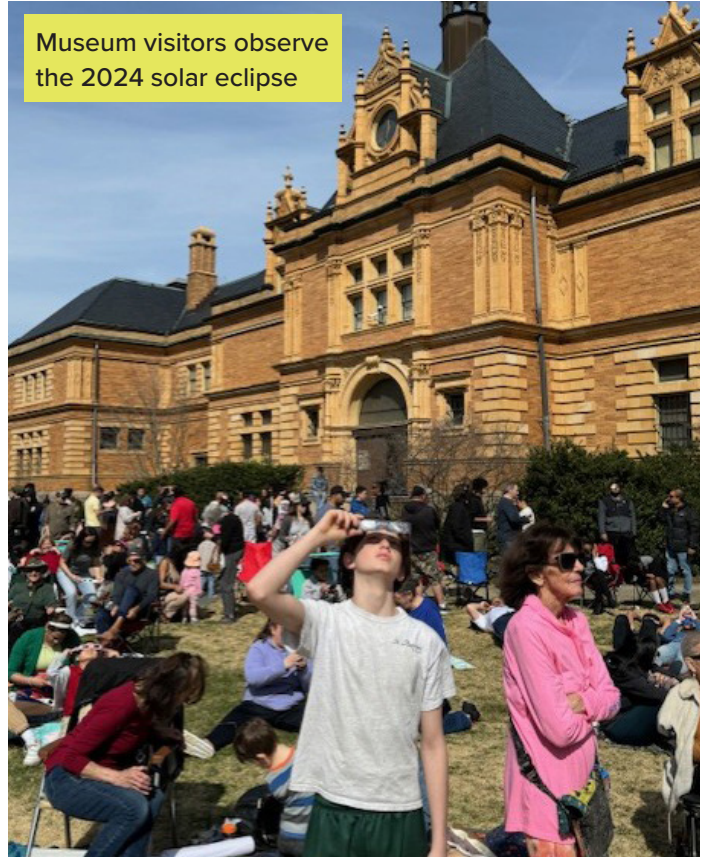
Throughout the year, the Museum offered customized free programs to 1,212 Providence students and 18 teachers, further expanding its educational outreach. The Museum also hosted over 1,700 people at the Sunsational Eclipse Family Fun Days and the free community eclipse watch party to experience the April eclipse. Additionally, the Museum continued its partnership with Providence Recreation Centers, providing engaging programming to 221 participants. In collaboration with NASA, the Museum supported 220 Providence students in participating in ExoLab-11, a live mission aboard the International Space Station, connecting students with real-world scientific endeavors.

The Museum expanded its offerings with new walking tours at Roger Williams Park and North Burial Ground, as well as introducing fresh programming at the Betsey Williams Cottage. This included open houses, tours, music events, and family activities, which added new cultural and educational opportunities to the community. The Museum also debuted new live planetarium shows and two full-dome planetarium programs, further enhancing its immersive educational experiences.

Capital improvements continued to enhance the Museum's accessibility and visitor experience. Renovations included new bathrooms, repairs to the sewer system, updated seating and acoustics for the planetarium, repairs to the exterior envelope, new doors, a welcome center, and an upgraded education center. The Museum's collaboration with local organizations also grew, with new community programs in partnership with the RWP Zoo, local artists, colleges, and the RWP Conservancy. Notable programs included Moon Hikes and Observe the Moon, which brought people together to engage with the night sky. The Museum also launched its Museum-on-the-Go initiative, bringing its collections to the RWP Gateway and Providence Recreation Centers, allowing even more people to engage with its exhibits. Additionally,

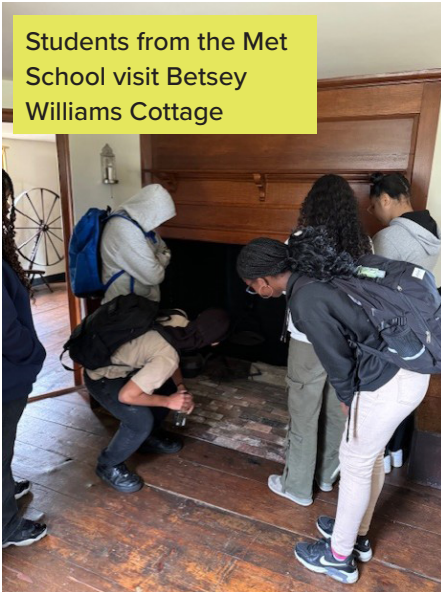
the Museum continued to mentor students through collaborations with the RI Natural History Survey, Met School, Bay View Academy, URI, and West Bay Collaborative, offering career development opportunities and hosting student showcases and exhibits. These efforts solidified the Museum's role as a vital resource for both education and community enrichment.

Museum visitors observe the 2024 solar eclipse

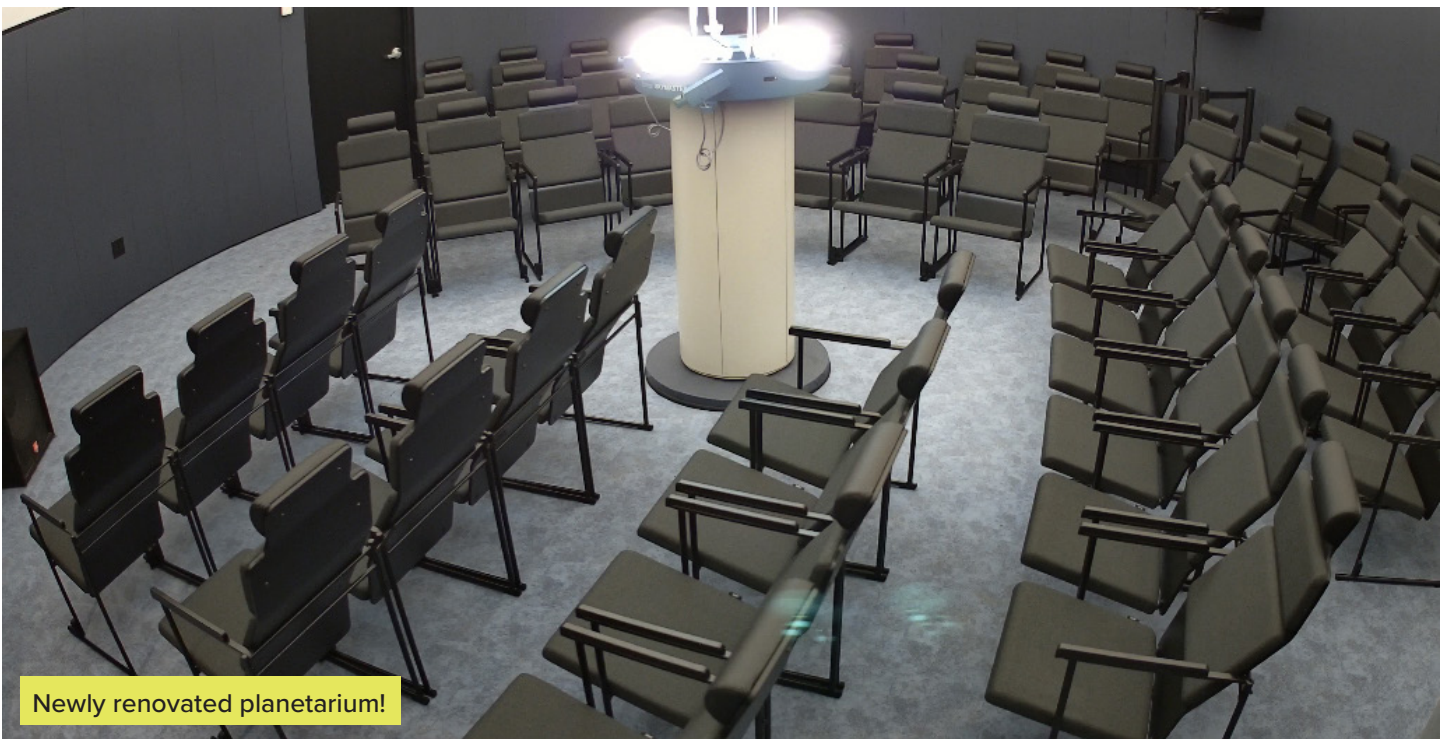
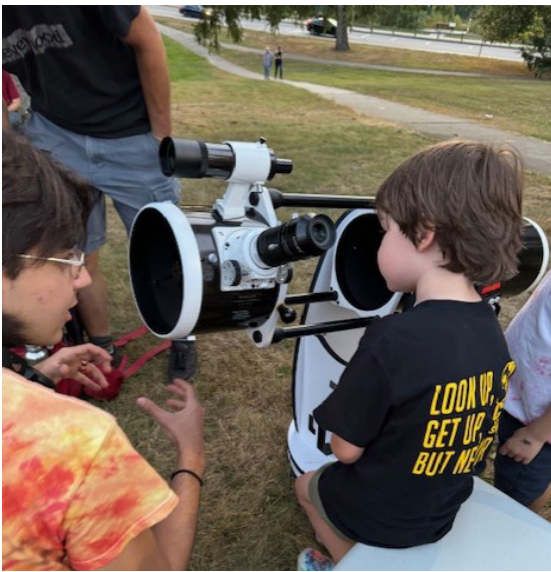


Moon Hike

Students from the Met School visit Betsey Williams Cottage



Mayor Smiley visits the archives



Newly renovated planetarium!

PROGRAMMING

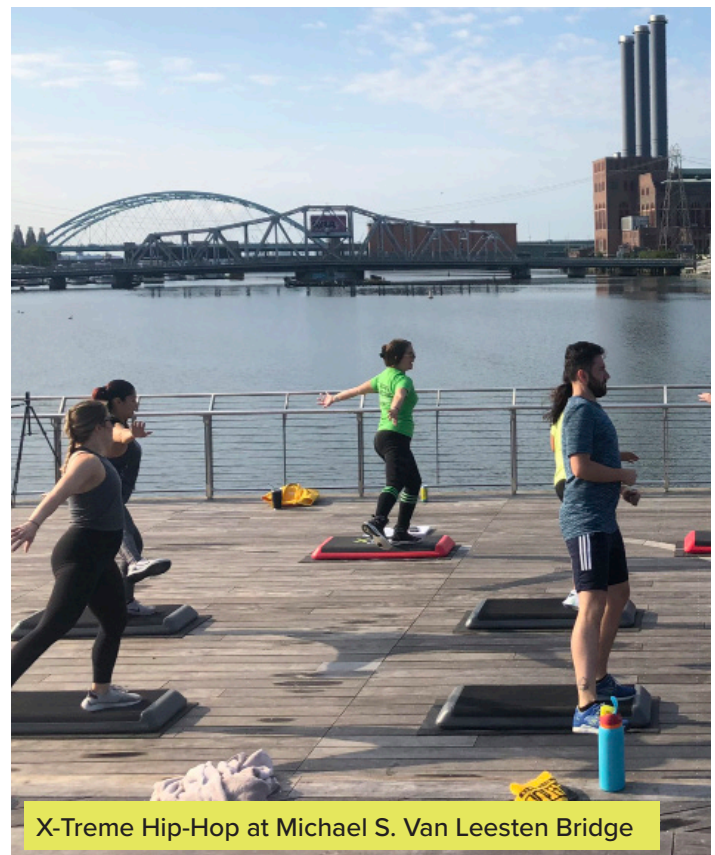
2024 was an exceptional year for enjoying all that Providence Parks and our partners had to offer. We focused our programming on arts and entertainment, health and wellness, and supporting smaller neighborhood events. One of the standouts was our series of Earth April events, which featured educational and hands-on opportunities centered around water conservation and environmental awareness. In collaboration with Art, Culture, and Tourism (ACT) and P3, the Parks team funded and helped revitalize the Edward Ely Performing Arts Series, showcasing local artists in over 15 parks and featuring more than 28 performances.

This year also saw a wide variety of free fitness classes for all ages and abilities, including yoga, tai chi, barre, Zumba, "Walks with Doc and Pups," and strength training across more than 20 park locations. While downtown parks experienced some quieter moments due to ongoing construction at the rink and Burnside Park, our partners at the Downtown Providenc Parks Network brought the Burnside Music Series back to life. We also worked with local partners at Roger Williams Park to expand seasonal events, including the Holiday Tree Lighting, Wicked Walks at the Michael S. Van Leesten Bridge, and the Halloween Bash at the RWP Gateway. These initiatives helped keep our parks vibrant and engaging throughout the year, fostering a strong sense of community and wellbeing.

**EARTH APRIL CELEBRATION AT
ROGER WILLIAMS PARK
DALRYMPLE BOATHOUSE
MONDAY, APRIL 22ND 10AM - 4PM**



1000 ELMWOOD AVENUE PROVIDENCE, RI 02907

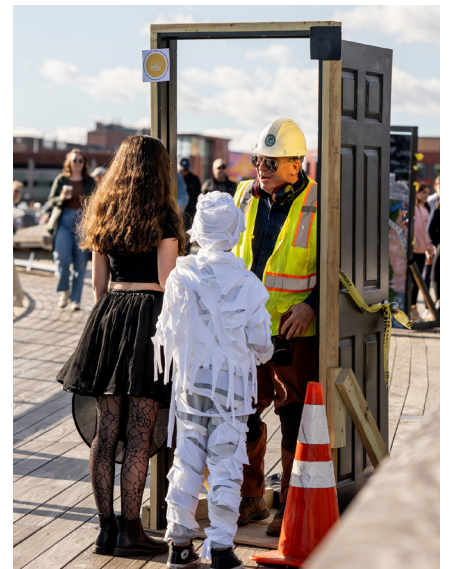


X-Treme Hip-Hop at Michael S. Van Leesten Bridge

Ely Fund Neighborhood Performing Arts Series

July - September 2024

We are excited to share a wide variety of art and artists across 13 different Parks with you for free all summer long and can't wait to see you there!



4th Annual Wicked Walk at Michael S. Van Leesten Bridge



Fitness in the Parks

Fitness in the Parks (FITP) programming continues to provide free, all-ages, and all-abilities fitness opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, year-round. While we strongly believe in the mantra “Outside Every Day,” expanding indoor class offerings is a key part of increasing access to free health and wellness resources. This approach helps foster healthier individuals and a stronger, more connected community.

In 2024, the Parks Department partnered with the City’s Senior Services division to expand our class offerings and locations. As of January, we began offering classes at the Roger Williams Park Gateway Center, the Botanical Center, and five Senior Services facilities across Providence. Additionally, we increased the number of parks equipped with high-quality, durable fitness equipment from 12 to 18,

FITP programming in 2024 offered a diverse array of classes and instructors, including Bachata and Merengue dance at the RWP Gateway Center, boot camp on the Michael S. Van Leesten Pedestrian Bridge and at the RWP Gateway Center, free kayak tours at the Downtown Boat Launch, plant walks led by the Natural History Museum, salsa dance classes at the RWP Gateway Center, Shape and Sculpt at the Temple to Music and RWP Gateway Center, step aerobics at the MVL Pedestrian Bridge and RWP Gateway Center, Tai Chi at the Japanese Garden and RWP Gateway Center, Walk with a Doc at various parks, wildlife walks with the Urban Wildlife Education Partnership, and Zumba at the Temple to Music and RWP Gateway Center. These offerings helped make fitness accessible, engaging, and inclusive for all of Providence. As such, we significantly increased participation in many fitness classes, with some seeing attendance double over the course of the year.



Food & Play Access

This summer, the Eat Play Learn (EPL) program employed 33 high school and college-bound graduates as EPL Ambassadors at 15 parks, providing valuable work experience, mentorship, and exposure to health and wellness careers. In partnership with SkillsRI, the program offered unstructured PlayCorps activities, crafts, books, games, and musical instruments, alongside community meal services, ensuring that youth received both nourishment for the body and mind.

EPL also partnered with libraries, nature conservancies, fitness instructors, and performers to offer enrichment activities for youth and families. Highlights included storytelling, and using recycled and repurposed materials to make art, and facilitate imaginative play. Other engaging programming included, Yoga, Roger Williams Park Zoo mobile visits, 15-minute “Field Trips,” Rhode Island Black Storytellers Ely performances, and Community Library Bookmobile Story Hours. These efforts provided creative, educational, and active experiences for the community.

Summer Meals

By combining unstructured activities, community partnerships, and meal services, we continue to draw families to our parks, fostering safe spaces where mind and body are nurtured while enjoying the outdoors.

The Eat Play Learn (EPL) Ambassadors served free USDA summer meals, while providing fun things to do in our parks. This approach led to an increase in meals served at parks with EPL Ambassadors.

In 2024, we expanded the program by partnering with DoorDash to provide 400 Community Cards (valued at \$10,000) to families, ensuring access to nutritious food outside the summer meal service.

CACFP Meals

In 2024, the Parks Department facilitated 54,891 after-school snacks and suppers for youth across Providence. These meals were served at all Providence Recreation Centers, four community libraries, YMCA locations, and through the Project Goal Soccer program.

As with the Summer Meals program, the CACFP meals were provided alongside enrichment, art and recreation activities, including after-school homework help, basketball, soccer, arts and crafts, and reading/storytelling, ensuring that youth had access to both nourishment and engaging programming. In total, 75,554 meals were served

through the Parks Department’s Summer Meals Program at parks and community centers citywide.

Celebrating Stewardship with Earth April and Nature Everywhere Programming

Mayor Brett Smiley’s 2024 Earth Day theme, “The Wonders of Water,” focused on flooding mitigation, shoreline conservation and rain barrel giveaways. In partnership with community organizations, over 1,000 volunteers participated in tree planting, mulching, stormwater drain tagging, and other stewardship activities across 30 parks and public spaces. Fifty rain barrels, painted by local artists and youth from Recreation Centers, were distributed to Providence residents. A mural depicting Rhode Island’s pre-colonial wildlife along the Providence River was unveiled in Downtown Providence at the end of Earth April.

Looking Ahead

The Providence Parks Department, in collaboration with other city departments, attended the Nature Everywhere Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, and secured a \$50,000 grant to enhance natural spaces throughout Providence. This grant will fund a pilot program to hire high school students as Nature Ambassadors, who will support events, programming, and mentorship. Set to launch on Earth Day 2025, the initiative aims to engage youth with nature while highlighting potential career opportunities in the field.



The Providence Rink

The Providence Rink experienced a transformative year with significant infrastructure improvements designed to enhance both functionality and aesthetics. Key upgrades included the installation of a new cold floor for the ice rink, state-of-the-art chiller refrigeration equipment, new clear dasher boards, and a striking shade sail structure that will cover part of the facility. These investments focused on improving climate resiliency, sustainability, and infrastructure while introducing an artisanal shade feature (spring 2025) to ensure the rink remains a year-round destination.

During the winter season, the rink saw over 30,000 admissions, with many more visitors enjoying the park throughout the colder months. The Providence Rink also hosted 72 birthday parties and sold 4,117 Ice Bumper Car tickets, further solidifying its place as a popular community hub.

The Providence Rink by the Numbers: Winter – Ice Skating

- 30,677 Admission
- 31,746 Skate Rentals
- 2182 Group Sales
- 72 Birthday Parties
- 82 Season Passes
- 376 Units of Merchandise
- 4,117 Ice Bumper Car Tickets

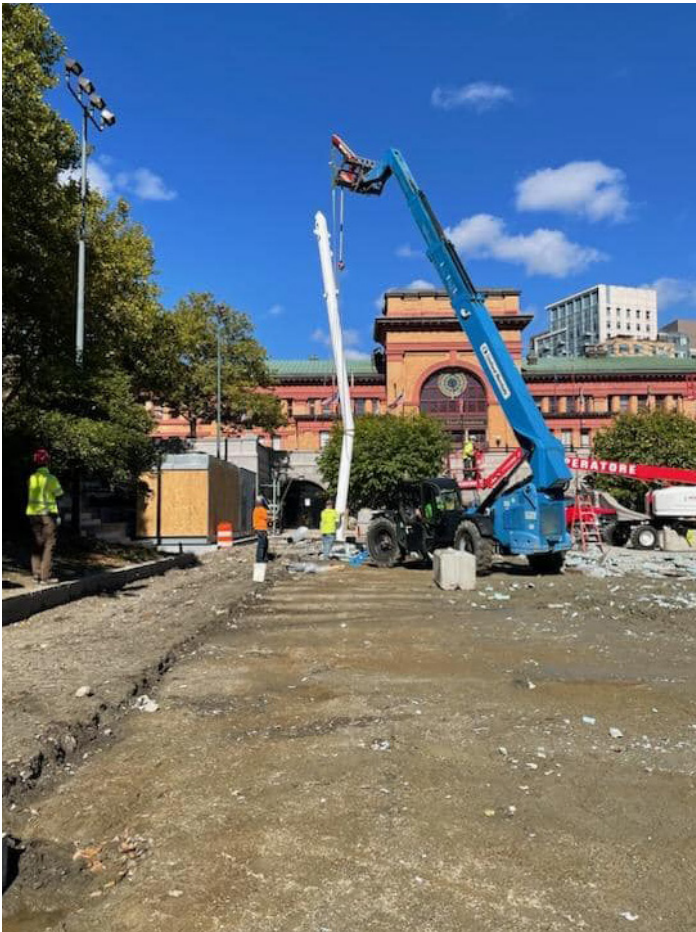


THE PROVIDENCE RINK
IMPROVEMENTS COMING THIS WINTER!

PROVIDENCE PARKS
THE PROVIDENCE RINK

SKATING, ICE BUMPER CARS,
SKATING LESSONS, BIRTHDAY
PARTIES AND MORE!

2 KENNEDY PLAZA PROVIDENCE, RI | 401.680.7390 | THEPROVIDENCERINK.COM



Artful Parks

This year, we expanded our artistic offerings with two significant murals that connect children and families to nature and local wildlife. At Brassil Park, artists Martin Smick and Duane Slick unveiled *Pictures from the Great Shared Earth*, celebrating the beauty of the Earth. At Memorial Park, Chromacouncil artists, Quinn Corey and Linsey Wallace created *Under the Cobblestones, the Beach*, featuring depictions of precolonial wildlife.

We also introduced an impactful lighting installation in the Waterplace Park Tunnel, honoring Providence's diverse cultural communities. In partnership with the Downtown Providence Parks Network and Site Specific, the Parks team managed this project while restoring the tunnel's infrastructure and removing outdated features.

Another highlight was the installation of the Billy Taylor Park Bridge, designed by The Steel Yard and artists Brandan Rose and Ysanel Torres. Additionally, two of nine repurposed wind turbine benches placed around the Riverwalk, funded by a Canvus grant, include feature art and illustration. These two benches, titled *Rise Above* by artist Debra Sue Solecki and *Squid* by our Landscape Designer Addie Newbold, add a unique artistic flair to the park.

We also celebrated the completion of the My HomeCourt Pickleball court at 9th Street Court, designed by artist Sanford Biggers and painted by Elevated Thought.



Ninth Street Courts by My HomeCourt



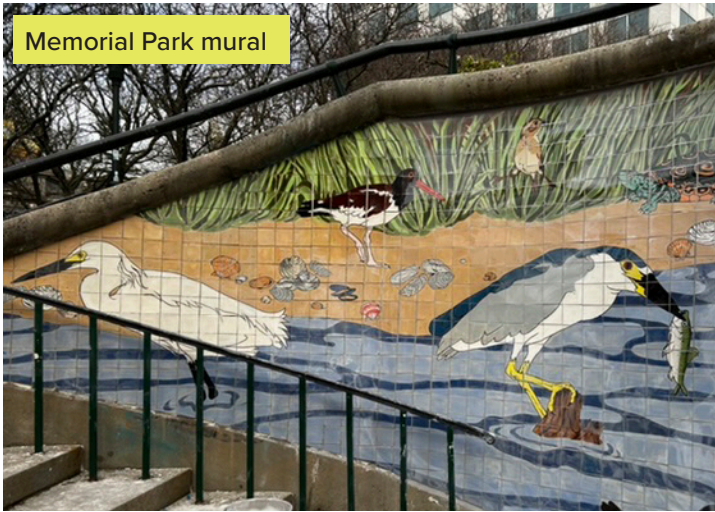
Mattie Smith Memorial



Botanical Center mural



Billy Taylor Park overpass



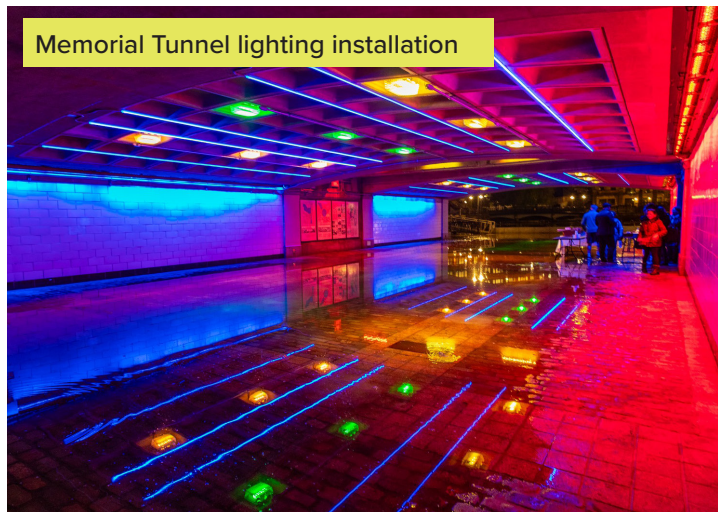
Memorial Park mural



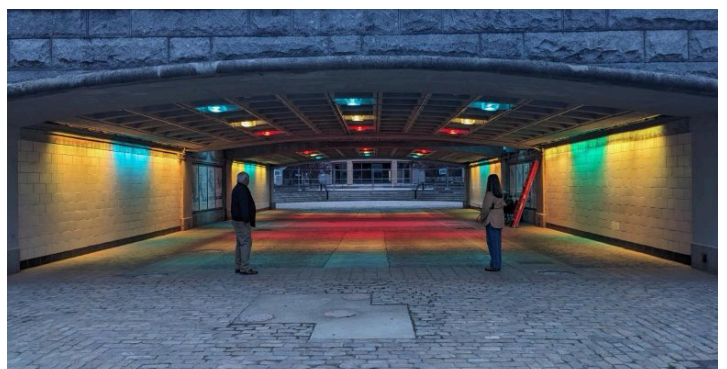
Brassil Park mural



Installation of bench featuring art by Addie Newbold



Memorial Tunnel lighting installation



Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership

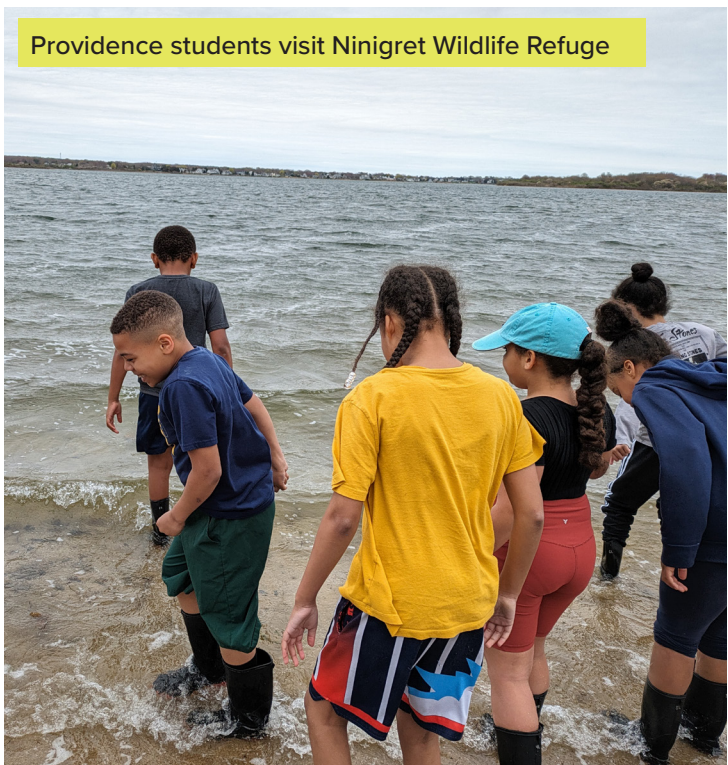
In 2024, the Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership marked its 10th anniversary, celebrating a decade of connecting residents and visitors to nature through city parks and neighborhood walks. With the support of numerous community partners, opportunities to engage with nature continue to grow. These connections are fostered through in-school programming, afterschool activities, and public events hosted in collaboration with statewide Rhode Island organizations.

Monthly free bird walks provided valuable data on bird species in city parks while welcoming birdwatchers of all levels. Family-focused fishing programs at Roger Williams Park drew hundreds, educating participants about local waterways and wildlife. Providence students utilized city parks as outdoor classrooms, expanding their learning from local schoolyards to nearby parks, with some also engaging at Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge through the Teacher Institute.

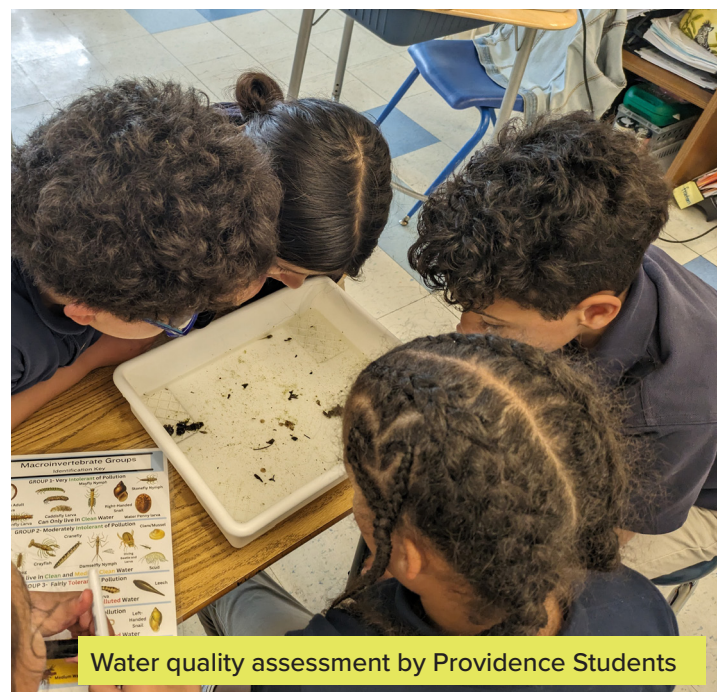
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service supported the maintenance and planting of the Amtrak Station's native plant garden, created and maintained by the Parks Department. Additionally, nine schools and 25 teachers engaged with nature through walking field trips to local parks, and over 250 participants joined free bilingual fishing programs throughout the summer.



Bilingual fishing program in Roger Williams Park



Providence students visit Ninigret Wildlife Refuge



Water quality assessment by Providence Students

Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Conservation Partnership celebrates its 10th anniversary!



Birding in Providence



North Burial Ground

North Burial Ground has garnered significant attention in recent months, showcasing its growing role as a historical and cultural landmark. In December 2023, *American Cemetery & Cremation* featured the cemetery in *On the Road: Stories that Continue for More Than 350 Years*, highlighting its rich legacy. In May/June 2024, *Yankee Magazine* included the cemetery in its Summer Travel Guide, calling it one of the best historical walking tours in Rhode Island. The article described the cemetery as a peaceful 110-acre resting place with meandering pathways, offering both historical insight and serene strolls. In October 2024, *Rhode Island Monthly* featured North Burial Ground in its Rhode Trips section, and in November 2024, *News from Brown* highlighted the cemetery's vibrant celebration of Día de los Muertos. These stories reflect our ongoing efforts to raise awareness of the cemetery's historical significance and expand its tourism potential through engaging programs and events.

Throughout the year, North Burial Ground hosted a variety of programs, attracting over 1,000 visitors. In addition to our main programming season (April-November), which brought in approximately 730 guests, the cemetery hosted community-driven events such as the Wheeler School Founder's Day and the Armenian Genocide Memorial, among others. The cemetery also saw the development of a docent program, which recruited 6 volunteers to lead specialized tours, connecting with new audiences. Some of the most popular events included Sunday 1899 with 90 guests, LitArtsRI Cemetery Write-in with 50 guests, and the Mausoleum Hill Sessions with 175 guests. Partnering organizations such as Councilwoman Sue Anderbois, Councilman Miguel Sanchez, Dr. Jordi Rivera Prince, Brown Anthropology, Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology at Brown, LitArtsRI, Roger Williams Park Museum of Natural History (with Renee Gamba), Dr. Fran Leazes (with Elmcrest Films), Providence Children's Film Festival, 48hr Film Festival, Rhode Island Historical Society, Lippitt House, and Dave Alves Music have contributed to enriching the cemetery's programming, helping to cultivate a deeper connection between the public and this historic space.

North Burial Ground also continues to be a hub for scholarly research. This year, Director Annalisa Heppner collaborated with Dr. Jordi Rivera Prince, a Brown University anthropology professor, on the North Burial Ground Documentation Project. This initiative, funded through Brown's Data Science Initiative, involves four student researchers documenting and assessing the condition of tombstones in the cemetery's oldest

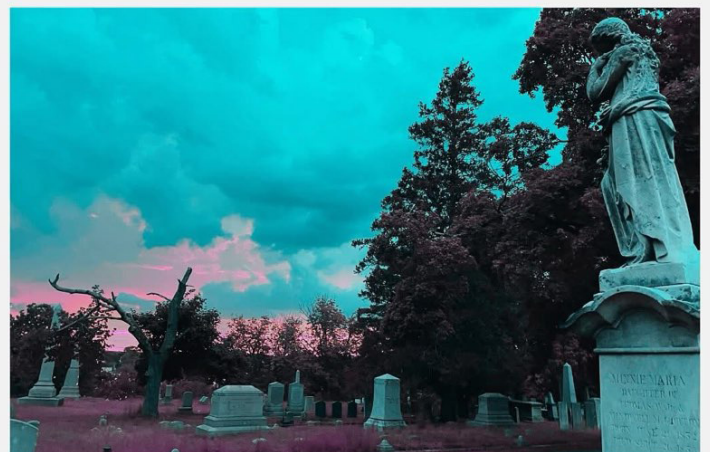
section. A key aspect of the project is the creation of a "tombstone parser," an AI tool designed to assist with data collection. This research is not only advancing the field of cemetery archaeology but also supporting NBG's administrative goals by updating historical records, enhancing preservation efforts, and improving cemetery management software. With \$25,000 in seed funding, this partnership exemplifies the power of academic-community collaboration, and the team plans to apply for further funding to continue this important work.

North Burial Ground by the Numbers:

- Total Burials and Inurnments as of 12/17: 194
- Total New Sales (including pre-needs, representing people choosing to use North Burial Ground): 120
- Total Foundations Set: 70
- Total Media and News Features: 5
- CIMS Data Entry: 2,546 "spaces" entered, each with 12-25 associated data points
- Headstones documented through the North Burial Ground Documentation Project: 515



CEMETERY SCENES



CEMETERY SCENES SERIES 2: *GATES OF HEAVEN* (1978). PRESENTED BY NBG W/CRICKET CINEMA. AN EVENING OF CEMETERY CULTURE AND FILM @ NBG. FRIDAY, AUGUST 16TH @ SUNSET. GUESTS CAN BEGIN ARRIVING EARLY AS 6:30 PM. MEET AT ROCHAMBEAU GATE. FREE PARKING ON NORTH MAIN STREET. BRING YOUR FRIENDS, LAWN CHAIRS, BLANKETS, SNACKS, DRINKS, ETCETERA! NO SMOKING OR ALCOHOL PERMITTED. @PVDNORTHBURIALGROUND



Dia de los Muertos at North Burial Ground



Spooky Victorian tour



INFORMATION & ACCESS

At Parks, we aim to make our parks unique and welcoming to all, which includes ensuring access to information and data collection. Whether through monthly reports for the Parks Superintendent and Mayor's staff, skill-sharing presentations at the Parks Conference, or providing age-based playground recommendations, our work order and asset-inventory data form the foundation for effective cross-departmental coordination. A collaborative synergy has emerged between the Design and NPS/Maintenance teams, optimizing the impact of funds spent on park improvements and establishing a clear, well-resourced maintenance schedule. The Maintenance team also has a clearer process to immediately repair playgrounds and parks that are not currently being addressed by the design team.

Key trends from the past year highlight the impact of cross-team collaboration, adjustments to work order schedules prioritizing quality over quantity, and improved staff proficiency with the work order platform. Overall, Parks completed fewer work orders in the "Other" category in 2024 compared to 2023. This shift reflects ongoing refinements to the Team-Category-Task choice lists, enhancing detail and relevant reporting. Notably, 2024 NPS data introduced new categories, separating year-round tasks like tree pruning and debris removal from seasonal tasks such as leaf mulching and turf maintenance. This change provides more accurate, seasonal data, aligning work with the varying lengths of mowing, leaf, and winter seasons, as well as optimizing labor crew sizes.

Work orders completed by the Barrel Crew decreased from last year, as they were assigned one work order per shift, each covering up to 30 parks, instead of completing 30 individual orders. Maintenance Graffiti work orders dropped by 65%, partly due to a 55% decrease in graffiti occurrences. NPS now handles smaller graffiti removal tasks, such as tags and stickers, while maintenance continues larger painting and pressure washing jobs. Removing dumped items from parks increased by 35%, with a 5% rise in IV needle pickups. Event-related work orders doubled, reflecting increased park activations.

As we enter phase three of Asset Essentials implementation, we aim to make our asset-inventory data even more comprehensive and dynamic. Additional

training will empower field staff to update asset conditions and conduct audits to ensure system-wide compliance with Parks standards. Priority maintenance tasks will be identified and ranked quantitatively to ensure maintenance is performed equitably citywide, in a timely manner, and in a way that maximizes our return on investment. This will also extend to the Event Manager module, which we will use to capture and recoup expenses for event labor and materials.

With the launch of a new PVD311 platform, we will build on our success in integrating constituent requests into our operations. Beginning with Knowledge Base Articles, we will explore how PVD311 can evolve into a platform for engagement, not just a tool for addressing complaints. On the back end, these efforts will generate high-quality data that will refine our analysis and reporting, helping to guide future projects and purchases. Parks enthusiasts can also look forward to more interactive surveys and fun crowdsourcing campaigns in the coming year. We continuously strive to be the best-run City Parks Department, and each day, we practice and perfect our craft, always humbled by the privilege of doing such rewarding work.

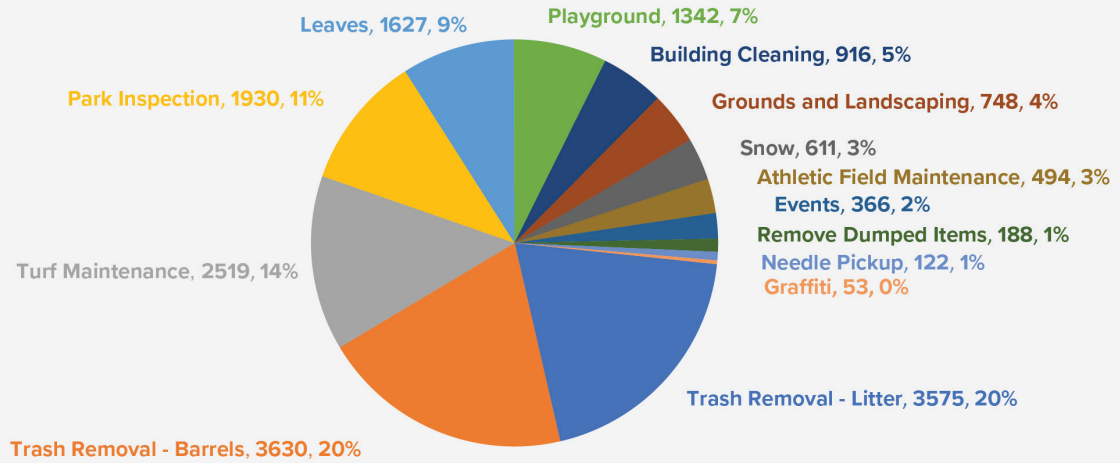


Information & Access Highlights:

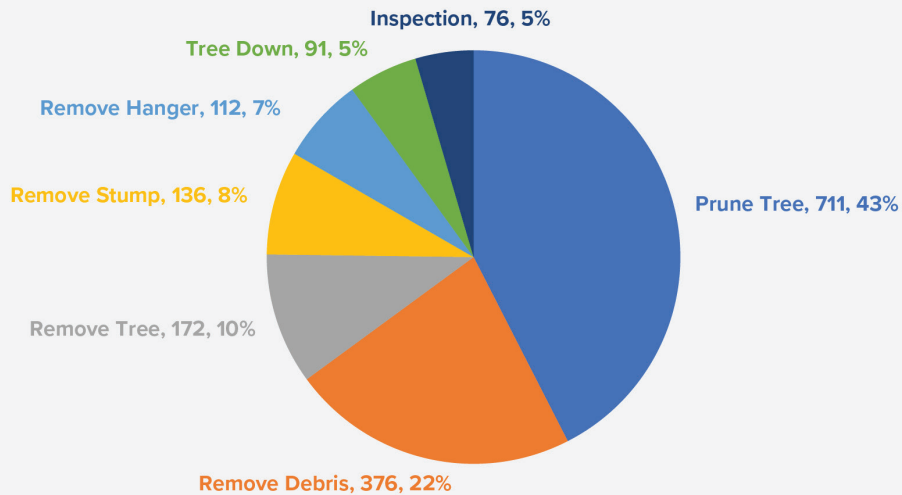
- **84** Parks audited to update Playground Equipment and other Asset Details
- These Park audits generated **242** work orders that were completed
- **115** IT help desk tickets on behalf of parks staff
- **432** PVD 311 Requests responded to
- **4332** GIS Assets Created - Inventoried

Data is from November 1, 2023 - November 1, 2024

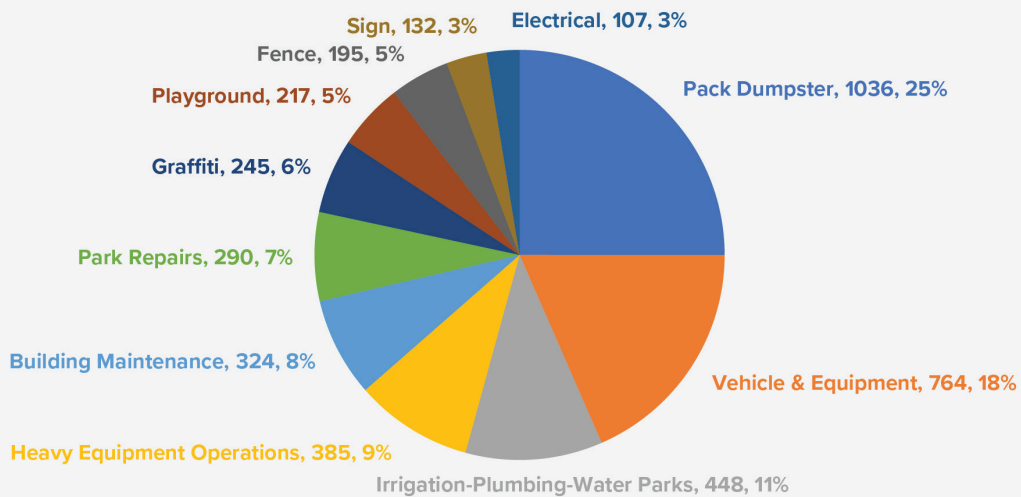
NPS WO Completed 2024 – Total: 18,121



Forestry WO Completed 2024 – Total: 1,850



Maintenance WO Completed 2024 – Total: 4,143



FUND DEVELOPMENT, REVENUE & RECOGNITION

AWARDS - Total Grant Awards **\$3,411,932**

- **\$400,000** RIDEM Outdoor Recreation Opportunities Grant for Cabral Park.
- **\$675,000** Municipal Infrastructure Grant Program (MIGP) for RWP Ponds Treatment Train.
- **\$500,000** Municipal Resiliency Program (MRP) Grant for India Point Park Climate Resiliency and Adaptive Shoreline Project.
- **\$250,000** Coastal Resiliency Program Grant (CRP) for India Point Park Climate Resiliency and Adaptive Shoreline Project.
- **\$945,000** Representative Gabe Amo Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) for Mashapaug Pond.
- **\$100,000** Helen Walker Raleigh Trust grant for Block Pruning Program and tree planting match.
- **\$55,000** USFWS Grant for Urban Wildlife Partnership through P3.
- **\$25,000** NASA Space Grant for Museum of Natural History.
- **\$6,932** RI Foundation (Gilmore Memorial Fund).
- **\$5,000** RI Foundation (Haffenreffer) Family Fund.
- **\$450,000** Municipal Infrastructure Grant Program (MIGP) for the Cunliff Lake Boardwalk & Fishing Dock.

EVENTS & PERMITS

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| • 59 total events at Roger Williams Park Casino. | \$125,150 revenue |
| • 137 total Small Park Permits and 33 Special Event Permits issued. | \$90,298 revenue |
| • 98 total events at the RWP Botanical Center. | \$420,590 revenue |

RECOGNITION

- Received Providence Preservation Society co-award for Betsey Williams Sycamore Tree Preservation & featured in short film.
- Featured in Providence Journal for Providence Rink Restoration.
- North Burial Ground featured in Rhode Island Monthly Magazine as well as Yankee Magazine, which called it one of the best historical walking tours in Rhode Island.
- RWP Gateway recognized by the State of Rhode Island for its dedication to public service and community engagement; the City of Cranston for its collaborative efforts with regional organizations, and; U.S. Congress (Rep. Gabe Amo) for its commitment to community development, inclusion, and education.

Fiscal Management

The Fiscal Office plays an integral role in ensuring the financial health and operational success of the Parks Department. In 2024, the office was responsible for managing a range of essential functions, from the development and oversight of the department's operating budget to payroll processing, recruitment efforts, and the expansion of procurement contracts. With a total operating expense of \$18,035,837, the Fiscal Office worked diligently to ensure resources were effectively allocated, supporting the department's mission to maintain and enhance the city's parks system and provide high-quality services.

One of the major initiatives for 2024 was the expansion of blanket contracts, which streamline procurement processes across the department. By negotiating broader, more flexible agreements, these contracts allow divisions to quickly and efficiently obtain the parts, services, and materials needed to maintain and improve the city's parks. This initiative has significantly improved operational efficiency, reduced procurement delays, and ensured that park facilities continue to perform at their best.

Looking ahead to 2025, the Fiscal Office is focused on fully implementing a centralized purchasing system aimed at further improving procurement efficiency. This system will consolidate the ordering process, reduce redundancies, and enhance coordination between divisions. By centralizing inventory management, the office will better track stock levels across parks, ensuring that essential supplies—such as equipment parts, landscaping materials, and safety gear—are always available. The initiative will also drive cost savings through bulk ordering, allowing the department to take advantage of economies of scale and reduce overall expenses. This centralized approach will be crucial in maintaining smooth park operations, preventing delays in supply orders, and ensuring that inventory levels meet the department's ongoing needs.



Ribbon cutting at Neutaconkanut Skatepark

Fiscal Management by the Numbers:

Hiring Summary for the Year:

Total Positions Posted: 16

Total Hires: 18

- Internal Promotions: 3
- Summer Temp Employees Converted to Full-Time: 2

Procurement Summary for Fiscal Year 2025:

Total Requisitions Processed: 453

- General Fund Divisions: 5
- Revolving Fund Divisions: 13

Total Amount Procured for the General Fund: \$953,063.27



LOOKING AHEAD

As we enter 2025, the Parks Department is proud to lead with an exceptional team of support staff, operations specialists, design and systems professionals and program and facilities managers. Together, we remain dedicated to creating and maintaining sustainable public spaces and programs that are welcoming and inclusive for all.

In the coming year, we look forward to completing the projects initiated in 2024 and launching new and transformative ones. Among the highlights are major renovations at Cabral Park, George West Park, Richardson Park, Miguel Luna Park, Joslin Waterpark, and many more. Over the past decade, and most recently under the leadership of Mayor Brett Smiley, park improvements have breathed new life into our culturally rich and diverse communities. With new equipment and vehicles, we will ensure that our teams have the tools they need to continue this vital work. As part of our ongoing commitment, we are also embarking on a new 10-year strategic plan and re-branding effort to guide the future of our parks.

We are confident that the investments we've made in training, technical assistance, data collection, systems, partnerships, and innovation will make 2025 a standout year for all who work, relax, play, or explore in our parks. We are excited to continue collaborating with Mayor Smiley, the Park Commissioners, City Councilors and our many valued community partners.

The new year will bring both opportunities and challenges, and we are ready to meet them head-on as we continue our mission to create and maintain spectacular parks, venues and programs for all.





Parks Department Management Team from left to right: Christyl Melendez, Sam Daganhardt, Megan Gardner, Lee Ann Freitas, Michael Wojcicki, Rachel Colaiace, Joseph Wojtanowski, Annalisa Heppner, Brian Byrnes, Renee Gamba, Wendy Nilsson, Brant Gawryls, Nicholas Discullio, Hannah Falvey, Victor Lopes (Not pictured: Stacey Johnson)

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