

# Spotlight on the Parks Bond Program



We are excited at the progress we've made since Brookhaven became a city in 2012. Now entering our second decade, we want to share a focused look at the progress on our Parks Bond Program approved by voters in 2018.

This year marks the culmination of a long list of transformative improvements to several City parks, including Ashford Park, Blackburn Park, Briarwood Park, Brookhaven Park, Lynwood Park, and Murphey Candler Park. And there's more to come in 2023! Keep reading to see how we got here and where we're heading.

Turn the page for a brief history of our City Parks, how the community reached consensus on improvements, how the Parks Bond Program is managed, plus highlights on projects in the Program.

## A Brief History of Our City Parks and Reaching Consensus on Improvements

Brookhaven inherited 11 DeKalb County parks and facilities upon incorporation in December 2012. Citizen-driven master planning started in 2014 with most site-specific plans completed by Fall 2015. Council adopted master plans in 2016 and continued to add parkland and greenspace.

A 2018 change in county tax collections offered homeowners additional property tax relief but eliminated the funding source for capital improvements to parks. Based on completed master plans, the City's planning firm estimated \$77.5 million (2018 dollars) was needed for park improvements.

In July 2018, Council approved a bond referendum for the November ballot. Approved by nearly 60% of voters, \$40 million in capital improvements was authorized for Brookhaven parks and facilities.

## Estimates for the Parks Bond Capital Improvement Program

Ashford Park	\$1,943,954
Blackburn Park	\$1,279,810
Briarwood Park	\$7,013,100
Brookhaven Park	\$6,000,000
Lynwood Park	\$10,977,393
Murphey Candler Park I	\$8,984,138
Systemwide parks funding	\$3,470,000
Issuance cost	\$595,026

**Total - \$40,263,420**

## The Parks Bond Program Relies on Professional Management and Citizen Oversight

**Jacobs Engineering Group** serves as the Parks Bond Program Manager. This includes monitoring design, updating City staff and the website, working with City Purchasing to bid projects, reporting to the Oversight Committee, and construction management services.

**Clark Patterson Lee** is the engineering and landscape architecture firm that designed Parks Bond improvements in Ashford Park, Briarwood Park, Blackburn Park, Lynwood Park, and Murphey Candler Park.

**Lose Design** is the engineering and landscape architecture firm that designed Parks Bond improvements in Brookhaven Park, Blackburn Park, and the Briarwood Park pool.

The **Parks Bond Oversight Committee** was appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by Council in early 2019. The five-member committee consists of three positions with technical expertise and two citizen members.

The committee initially met to review park plans as the design firms completed the master plan process and moved to individual project design. The committee continued monitoring financial expenditures for each park to confirm items listed in the Parks Bond Referendum were being implemented and constructed.

As of the end of 2022, the committee has met 19 times to hear updates and discuss program items with support from the Program Manager. Meeting agendas and minutes can be found on the City Calendar and Parks Bond web pages.

Visit [www.BrookhavenGA.gov/Parks-Bond-Ref](http://www.BrookhavenGA.gov/Parks-Bond-Ref) to see more project pictures and site plans, review expenditures, learn about public involvement, and see how improvements have progressed since the Parks Bond Program started in 2018.



## Ashford Park

Ashford Park improvements include a **new splashpad** (on the location of the old pavilion) and a **new pavilion** sited on top of the hill. The splashpad features a multicolor soft surface and button activated water sprays. A lawn area, granite seatwalls, and a water curtain can double as seating and a stage area when the fountain is not in use. A grand opening for the splashpad was held in June 2021 with a ribbon cutting by Mayor John Ernst, Councilman John Park, and a family selected by Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.



The pavilion offers several picnic tables and ceiling fans to help cool off on hot days.

A **new park perimeter fence** replaced the old one and includes gates for access from Caldwell Road and the park parking lot.



## Briarwood Park

The new Briarwood Park Pool opened in September 2020 and was ready for the full summer swim season in 2021.

The competition pool has six lanes with markers and starting blocks for youth swim meets. For younger kids and those just looking for a cool spot, the pool is connected to a zero-entry play area with multiple play features.

The pool deck offers several shade options including a pavilion, large umbrellas, and tables with umbrellas. Amenities of the new poolhouse include restrooms and changing rooms, concessions, a lifeguard room, and an office at the entry gate.

Permits have been submitted to the City and County for Briarwood Park Improvements. The project will be bid and awarded

for construction in early 2023. Plans call for phased construction to minimize parking disruption during pool season and impacts to recreation center activities. Among the improvements are:

- Upgrades to the Recreation Center parking lot and surrounding area, including additional parking spaces and general improvements, stormwater detention below the parking lot, and a bioswale along the lot to help direct stormwater to the detention feature
- Modification of the park entrance with added parking and the removal of the entrance off Briarwood Way
- New community garden and pavilion
- Tennis pavilion, seating area, and additional parking
- Trails and a bridge
- Underground utilities





# Murphey Candler Park

As one of the largest City parks, improvements to Murphey Candler Park featured nine separate projects under

## New Playground

The **playground** on Candler Lake E was the first completed project in the park and was opened with a March 2021 ribbon cutting. The engineered mulch surface playground includes three pods with a climbing castle, double swing set and spring riders, and a tree climber tower. Sidewalk access from the street and to an existing restroom building was also added.



## Horseshoe Road and Community Green

The rebuilt **Horseshoe Road** opened in July 2022 following the same route with one-lane, one-way traffic flow. New gravel parking spaces along the road provide access to the pavilions and Community Green. Thanks to careful planning during design and construction, no trees had to be removed. Safer access to the playground on Candler Lake E was added with a new sidewalk along the existing gravel parking.

The **Community Green** opened with a ribbon cutting and inaugural performance in September 2022. The Green is set inside the Horseshoe Road off Candler Lake E and features a lawn with seatwalls and a small stage to encourage community and neighborhood use. A new path connects the Green to the new playground.



**Comments/Questions**  
**[ParksFeedback@BrookhavenGA.gov](mailto:ParksFeedback@BrookhavenGA.gov)**



Happy Trails & More Parking

Trails upgrades and connectivity in the park and along Murphey Candler Lake were a major component of the MCP improvements and were completed in different phases in 2021 and 2022 along with parking lot improvements that added more spaces.



The **South Trail** was opened with a ribbon cutting in September 2021. The 10' wide concrete trail runs along Nancy Creek from the football parking lot to the baseball/softball fields. Care was taken during design and construction to minimize tree removal along the trail route. Bridges were also added to cross the Murphey Candler Lake overflow and the North Fork Nancy Creek/lake spillway which improved access between the baseball and softball fields.



A year later, the **North Boardwalk** opened in September 2022 providing access across the area just north of Murphey Candler Lake. The 10' wide, wood boardwalk was built using a top-down construction method to avoid disturbing the wetlands and natural area. The boardwalk has already become a popular spot for birdwatching.



One of the last projects completed in 2022 was the **Multiuse Trail on Dam**, which opened with a ribbon cutting in December. The project was designed and constructed in coordination with the Georgia EPD Safe Dams Program. The new 11' wide trail replaced an old 5' wide sidewalk and features seven overlooks with benches that provide places to rest and enjoy lake views.

The **pool parking lot improvements** opened for use in March 2022 with a resurfaced south lot and an expanded north lot. Thirty parking spaces were added for ball field users and for the summer pool season. A new sidewalk along Candler Lake W offers safer access to the ball fields.





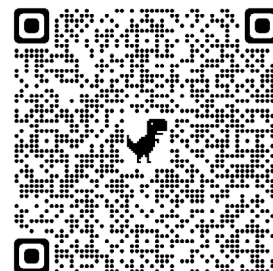
## The Lake House

The **Lake House** will be the final Parks Bond project within Murphey Candler Park. Construction plans are currently in permitting with the City and DeKalb County. Once permitting is complete, the bidding and awarding of the construction contract is expected to happen in the first part the year.

Construction will cap efforts that started in the early days of the Parks Bond Program with extensive public outreach to help guide programming and determine features for the new facility to meet the community's vision. Outreach kicked off in late 2019 and continued for most of 2020 with pop-ups at various events,



online surveys, and more. Undeterred by the Covid-19 pandemic, the City offered virtual input sessions and provided a customized toolkit so residents could facilitate their own sessions with friends, neighbors, and other community groups. Results of the public input were shared during an open house in late February 2021.



**Scan QR code to view Open House presentation.**



To make room for the parking lot expansion, the MCP Scout Hut was demolished in May 2022.

The project will also expand the existing parking lot from approximately 50 parking spaces to approximately 100 parking spaces to serve the Lake House and ball fields. In April 2021, the City extended a separate public input opportunity to help decide the extent and impact of additional parking to the corner of W Nancy Creek Dr and Candler Lake W. The community's expressed preference fell in the middle of the options provided.



With available space and community consensus for the Lake House, the concept moved into the design phase in 2022. The 4,000 square-foot facility is designed to blend with its surroundings and offer panoramic views of the trees and the lake. It will include a multipurpose room that can be divided into three separate areas with collapsible partition walls, restrooms, an office, pantry, and storage. The pantry will be ideal for a catering kitchen with sinks, countertop space, refrigerator, and a microwave oven. Restrooms with exterior access for trail and park users will also be part of the building. The lake side of the building will have operable glass walls that can be opened to a large deck running the full length of the building for a view of the lake.





## Lynwood Park

Construction of the **Lynwood Park splashpad, pool, and synthetic turf field** is on track for completion in time for the 2023 summer pool season. Most of the work in 2022 focused on below ground site prep, including adding and rerouting the existing sanitary sewer system and installing an underground stormwater detention system.

The 2016 park master plan included a lap pool and lazy river. The City held a town hall meeting in January 2020 to get community feedback on building a splashpad instead of the lazy river. The community was overwhelmingly in favor of the change. The most voiced request at the meeting was for more parking. As a result, two small lots were added creating 40 more parking spaces. Parking and drop-offs will be accessible on both Osborne Road and Mendell Circle.



The splashpad will have a zero-depth area with multiple spray features and the 1'-deep wading pool area will have more features plus a slide structure. The lap pool will be 3'-6" to 5' deep. The poolhouse will have men's and women's restrooms with changing areas and showers, a concession room, lifeguard room, and an office. The poolhouse will also have restrooms accessible from the turf field. An adjacent pavilion, outside the pool fence, will be available for small-group use.

The synthetic turf field will be striped for youth soccer and youth baseball/softball. The bases layout could also be used for activities such as adult kickball. The field will have a sand and natural material infill. A second pavilion will be at the turf field.



**Splashpad site**



**Pool excavation**

## Blackburn Park

Blackburn Park has been spruced up with new **marquee fencing and frontage landscaping** (completed 2019), **a renovated parking lot** (completed Fall 2020) plus **improvements to the lot** on Donaldson Drive, **shade structures**, and **landscaping** throughout the park.

The parking lot project included re-setting all the granite curbs within the park, plus milling and repaving the existing asphalt. To help manage stormwater, a bioretention pond was added that meets local and state regulations. The drive along the soccer field was realigned to get traffic off the roots of a 50-inch oak tree. An arborist helped ensure special care was taken for the large oak as well as a 34-inch tree at the playground.





4362 Peachtree Road  
Brookhaven, GA 30319

## Brookhaven Park

The City acquired the front half of Brookhaven Park from DeKalb County in 2022 after years of negotiation and litigation, which allowed the design of planned park improvements to proceed. Construction documents are currently in permitting with the City and County and work is expected to begin in early 2023.



Playtime with four-legged friends at the dog park will benefit from several amenities including a new parking lot and pavilion with restrooms and patio. Two legged-visitors can enjoy the new larger playground with restrooms and pavilion.

Safety improvements include modifications to the stormwater pond/system and trail improvements for fire fighter access.

Additional options based on available budget include:

- Large group pavilion (bid alternate)
- Stage area (bid alternate)
- Pavilion at community garden (bid alternate)

Design of the Peachtree Road sidewalk widening and entry gate is proceeding in coordination with GDOT. Sidewalk construction will be funded outside of the Parks Bond Program.

**Systemwide** items included in the Parks Bond Referendum include:

- **Capital Project Management** helps ensure projects meet budgets and schedules and is being provided by Jacobs Engineering Group.
- **Murphey Candler Lake Dredging** was completed with oversight by Public Works in Summer 2020.
- **Invasive Species** eradication is an ongoing effort managed by Parks & Recreation staff.
- **Park Security** is being implemented in new park facilities and throughout the existing parks by the City's Information Technology Department.