

# Georgia Community Schoolyards

## DeKalb County



# Communities that place a high value on **OUTDOOR ACCESS FOR ALL ARE**



**HEALTHIER**



**MORE RESILIENT**



**MORE EQUITABLE**



# THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF OUR SUPPORTERS:

WE'VE COMPLETED OVER

**5,000** projects  
parks, trails, schoolyards,  
and iconic outdoor places



GENERATED OVER

**\$84B** in public funding for  
parks and access to  
lands and waters



AND CREATED ACCESS TO OVER

**3.7 million** acres  
of public land



# OUR HISTORY IN GEORGIA

## The BeltLine

Commissioned Alex Garvin's study and acquired \$47 million of land for new parks and trail to help create Atlanta's defining public space.



## Chattahoochee River

Preserved 18,000 acres and 80 miles of riverfront along the Chattahoochee River.



## MLK National Historic Park

TPL was instrumental in the creation of this National Historical Park preserving the legacy of a civil rights icon.



## Cumberland Island

Acquired the first 2,200 acres to help create the Cumberland Island National Seashore.



# OUR INITIATIVES

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## LANDS

We work with landowners, partner groups and public agencies to acquire, create access to, and secure public ownership and stewardship of the lands and waters that make our communities great places to live, work, and play.



## TRAILS

Working with communities, we are creating and protecting trail systems across the country. Urban, suburban, and rural trails connect people to nature, recreation, schools, workplaces, and their broader neighborhood.



## PARKS

Working alongside youth and community members, equitable development entities and builders, we create parks that reflect and serve local communities and connect people to nature and to each other.



## SCHOOLYARDS

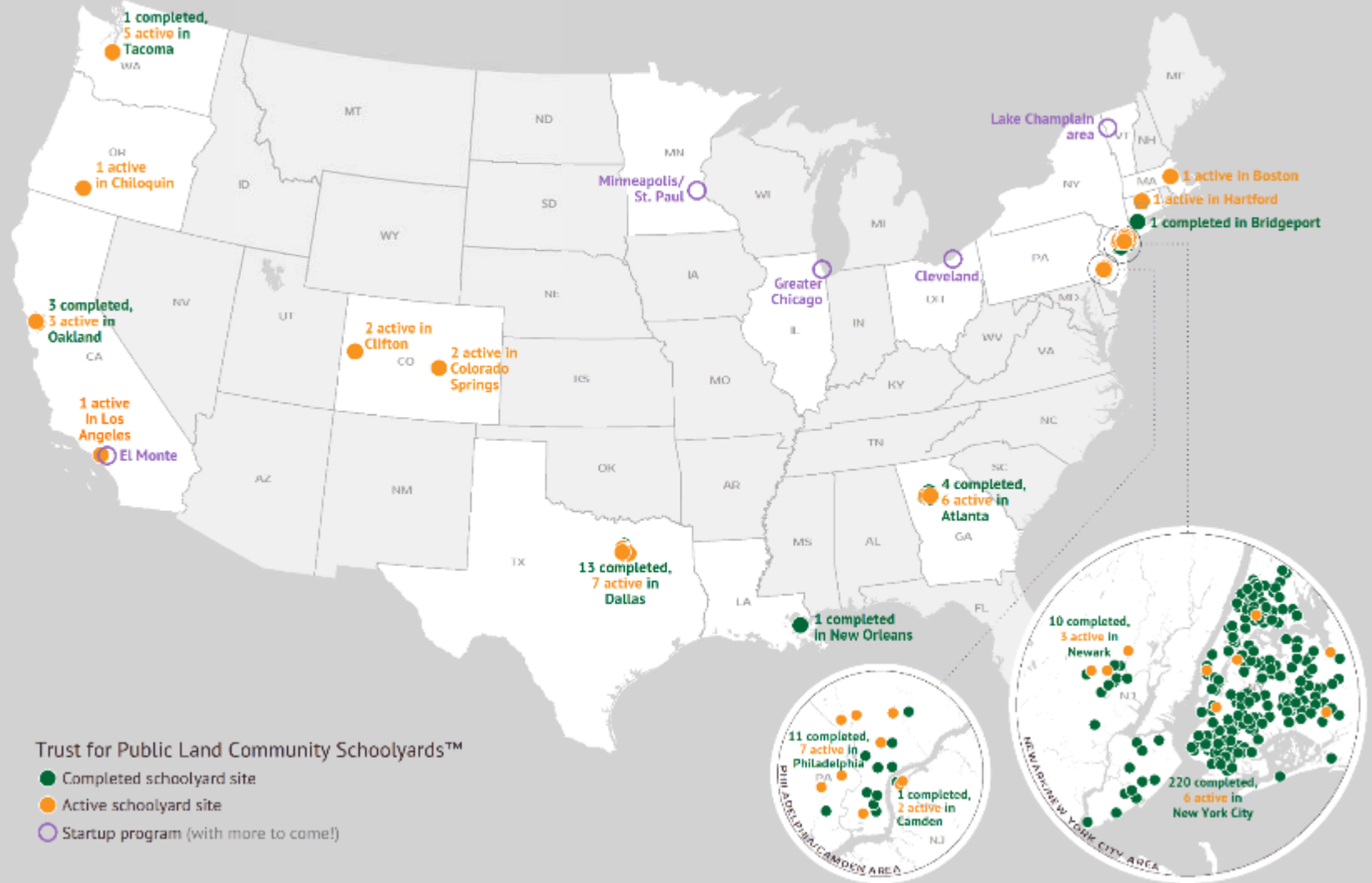
We work in partnership with students, parents, and communities to redesign and create schoolyards that are open to the public, serving as a hub for community empowerment, improved health and education, and climate resiliency.



TPL has created **robust schoolyard programs across the US**

Invested in **over 300 schoolyard sites**

Connected more than **4 million people** within a 10-minute walk of a community schoolyard



Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

# Community Schoolyards across the US

Over 300 transformations



# Transforming Schoolyards

Over 28 million kids in America don't have a park within a 10-minute walk of home. A solution is hiding in plain sight: community schoolyards.

- Shared spaces that support nature-based, outdoor learning and play for schools, and improved park access for neighbors
- Places that promote better mental and physical well-being, cleaner air, climate change resilience, and educational benefits
- Student-led and community-guided designs with expert support from TPL





**Schools in under resourced communities lack the features the students needs for learning**

J.W. Dobbs Elementary  
Atlanta, GA



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# Transforming Schoolyards provides students with places to learn, play and thrive outdoors

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## SCHOOLYARD

This schoolyard is open during school hours, from dawn to dusk daily. APS activities have priority usage.

Be courteous and respectful of others.

Use at your own risk.

Adults must be accompanied by a child.

All games and activities that could damage the lawn are restricted.

APS permit required for events or organized activities.

No selling of food or other items.

No weapons, smoking, illegal drugs, or chewing tobacco.

No alcohol.

No pets or animals, except for service or guide dogs.

No glass, bottles, or sharp objects.

No drones, remote-controlled planes, etc.

No amplified music, spilling, inappropriate language, verbal abuse, or fighting.

Violators may be restricted from future use, ejected, fined, or assessed damages for repairs.

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Atlanta Public Schools

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www.atlantapublicschools.net

J.W. Dobbs Elementary  
Atlanta, GA



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## Health and Wellness Benefits

- Increased access to public outdoor spaces encourages people to exercise more, improving overall health.<sup>1</sup>
- Access to nature and playgrounds have been associated with better general health for adults and youth, including:
  - Reduced stress levels
  - Reduced depression,
  - And improved social wellbeing
- Approximately **2/3 of young adult's grades 9 through 12** are not engaged in enough physical activity<sup>2</sup>
- The number of overweight children aged **6 to 11 tripled in the past 30 years**, going from 6.5% of the population in 1980 to 19.6% in 2010.<sup>3</sup>
- **Play in nature encourages children, especially girls, to remain active into adolescence.**<sup>4</sup>

1 A.T. Kaczynski, K.A. 2008 Henderson Parks and recreation settings and active living: a review of associations with physical activity function and intensity, *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 5 (4), pp. 619–632.

2 Centers for Disease Control. 2010. Healthy Youth! Accessed on October 13, 2017: [www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/overweight](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/overweight)

3 Hanna Hamdi, PhD. The Health Benefits of Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds, a Review of Literature.

4 Evenson, K. R., Murray, D. M., Birnbaum, A. S., Cohen, D. A., (2010). Examination of perceived neighborhood characteristics and transportation on changes in physical activity and sedentary behavior: The trial of activity in adolescent girls. *Health & Place*, 16(5), 977-985





## Community Benefits

- A well-designed schoolyard provides numerous benefits by fostering community interaction, community engagement, and human development.
- According to the EPA, shared space in nature where people can sit, relax, play, exercise, or gather with friends and family **has immense benefits to the fabric of a community.** <sup>5</sup>
- Research conducted by the University of Illinois has shown that barren landscapes without trees or views of green space are associated with negative social effects that include aggression, property crime, loitering, and litter. <sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [www.epa.gov/G3/green-streets-and-community-open-space](https://www.epa.gov/G3/green-streets-and-community-open-space)

<sup>6</sup> Yates, D. (2009). The science suggests access to nature is essential to human health. Illinois News Bureau.





Miles Elementary, Atlanta, GA

## Learning Benefits

- By investing in school campus activation, we can help students gain daily exposure to nature; that exposure is associated with increased student engagement in learning, attendance, attention spans, graduation rates, and plans to attend a 4-year college.<sup>9</sup>
- School attendance and engagement greatly affects academic achievement.
- **Students who are absent more than 10 percent of school days perform lower on standardized tests and have poorer graduation rates.<sup>10</sup>**
- One way to encourage attendance and enthusiasm for learning is to provide space in nature to play and explore. **Exploration and discovery in an outdoor, experiential setting increases enthusiasm for learning and promotes deeper engagement.<sup>11</sup>**

9 Williams & Dixon, 2013. Impact of Garden-Based Learning on Academic Outcomes in Schools.  
10 MacNaughton, P., Eitland, E., Kloog, I., Schwartz, J., Allen, J., (2017). Impact of particulate matter exposure and surrounding “greenness” on chronic absenteeism in Massachusetts public schools. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 14(2)  
11 Rios & Brewer (2014). Outdoor education and science achievement. Applied Environmental Education, 13:4, 234-240



**Representatives from Park Pride and TPL met with Columbia Elementary students for site analysis activities so that students can better understand the site conditions prior to design workshop**





# 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders at Sarah Smith explore international architecture, belonging, and different meanings of “home” through art.





# Over the past 4 years, the Georgia Community Schoolyard program has made an impact

- **Six completed** with two in the final stages of construction.
- Five in the design and/or permitting process.
- **Engaged over 250 volunteers** in addition to students and educators.
- Active programs with **Atlanta Public Schools** and **Fulton County Schools**.
- Working to identify public funding to engage students and build additional schoolyards



Ribbon cutting at J.W. Dobbs Elementary



# Over the past 4 years, the Georgia Community Schoolyard program has made an impact

- **6,265 Atlanta residents** will now be within a 10-minute walk of park
  - Including 1,143 residents under the age of 19,
  - 576 seniors,
  - And 998 low-income households
- **660 students** have been exposed to environmental and design professions through participatory design process
- At least schools have received **STEM certification** in part from our involvement with their schools
- The Georgia Community Schoolyards program continues to **gain attention locally and nationally** through media and through our corporate partners



Design workshop at Scott Elementary



PS 156 Waverly and LS 392 Brooklyn, NY

We saw these barren asphalt schoolyards and we recognized an amazing opportunity to reinvent them as vibrant city parks.

Photo by: Joe Martinez



# Thank you!

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