



PUBLIC  
TRUST  
FOR CONSERVATION

# Reviving the New Town Neighborhood's Success Park & Community Gardens



## Success Park as of Today

Success Park has fallen into such a state of disrepair (photos to left) that it is no longer an appealing place for neighborhood kids and has become a serious safety risk. These conditions are unacceptable for any park in our Jacksonville community.

It has become difficult for the New Town neighborhood to take pride of ownership in their long overlooked and under-resourced park.

*With your help we can revive this park now.*

## The Future of Success Park

The New Town community in Jacksonville's urban core needs strategic partners to help us reverse decades of environmental inequities. All of us need access to vibrant green spaces in order to thrive as individuals and as families. Historically New Town has not always enjoyed such equal access. The COVID-19 pandemic has made accessible outdoor spaces even more vital than ever.

New Town will benefit greatly from improvements to Success Park, which is its pocket park owned by HBCU Edwards Waters University and located directly adjacent to student housing. Our collaborative project will unify Success Park and the neighboring community gardens at New Town Success Zone "Urban Farmacy". Combined enhancements within both spaces will be transformational by providing a safe place for residents to gather for community, recreation and wellness activities. Planned improvements will include a mural art project in collaboration with the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, a new playground, outdoor fitness stations, a plaza space with outdoor seating, garden beds, an educational butterfly garden, outdoor kitchen, new trees/landscaping, tables/benches, fencing, safer pedestrian crosswalks, welcoming entrances, and enhanced lighting and signage.





## New Town Needs You

Hurtis Wyche (pictured above) is the New Town Community Garden's Manager. Hurtis grew up in the New Town neighborhood, graduated from EWC, and is committed to this project long-term.

Hurtis reflected, "Growing up here, I saw other kids getting in trouble and I knew I had to take a different path. Fortunately, the New Town Success Zone had set up this community garden right here in my neighborhood and I started volunteering. After a while, I really fell in love with watching healthy food grow and I felt like it was my responsibility to make this garden thrive."

Hurtis now hosts educational initiatives for kids including STEM programming for middle schoolers who live in New Town. He uses the Garden as a way to connect students with nature, remarking "it is so cool to see their eyes light up when we harvest the veggies."

### EDWARD WATERS PARK & COMMUNITY GARDEN Jacksonville, Florida



## Facts to Consider...

- ⚙️ 100 million people nationwide, including 28 million children, do not have a park within a 10-minute walk of home.<sup>1</sup>
- ⚙️ Within most cities, access to green spaces – like access to healthy food, healthcare and good schools – is also inequitable, with low-income households and people of color least likely to live close to parks with basic amenities.<sup>2</sup>
- ⚙️ Our New Town neighbors in ZIP code 32209 have a median household income of \$21,273 which is below the poverty line for a family of three. People living in this zip code are primarily black or African American. There are also an extremely large number of single parents and the percentage of children under 18 living in the 32209 zip code is large compared to other areas of the country.<sup>3</sup>
- ⚙️ In Jacksonville, there has been a 300% increase in behavioral health admissions since the pandemic began in early 2020 at Wolfson Children's Hospital according to Baptist Health. Many of these include intentional overdoses, overwhelming anxiety and depression, and eating disorders.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tpl.org/parks-and-an-equitable-recovery-parkscore-report>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/20/park-inequality-access-coronavirus-wellbeing>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unitedstateszipcodes.org/32209/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.baptistjax.com/juice/stories/mental-health/covid-19-and-kids-mental-health>



## Lending a Hand: One Community at a Time

⚙ The Public Trust not only coordinates the revitalization of green spaces but also uses the power of science and the law to protect these traditionally underserved communities. The Public Trust have protected Jacksonville's threatened lands, waters, and wildlife for over 15 years through our advocacy such as successfully bringing legal actions under the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act. Our fight for clean water and air continues to connect us to many other aspects of environmental justice. In the spirit of collaboration, the Public Trust partners with the strongest nonprofits, foundations, and government entities located within the communities we intend to serve.

⚙ The Public Trust has strategically partnered with LISC Jacksonville (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), the New Town Success Zone (NTSZ), and the A. Philip Randolph Institute for Law, Race, Social Justice and Economic Policy at Edward Waters University on this project. Together these entities provide decades of experience and expertise on how to best identify, activate, leverage, and sustain the resources needed for both Success Park and the New Town "Urban Farmacy" community gardens to bloom. Our strategic partners will each play a vital- and unique - role in this initiative being fully realized. For example, New Town Success Zone is working with the local community to ensure that their vision for this space is realized and that the project's outcomes meet the specific needs of the New Town neighborhood.

⚙ Our partner NTSZ has already built trust in the New Town neighborhood where Success Park is located through programs including their adoption of a model from the nationally recognized "Harlem Children's Zone". This program meets the needs of children at birth through college, and has developed programming for parents and family members addressing education, social services, family support, health, and community-building.

⚙ Another key strategic partnership for this project is with LISC Jacksonville, a subsidiary of the nation's leading community development support organization. LISC Jacksonville transforms challenged neighborhoods into healthy, sustainable communities: good places to live, work, do business and raise children. As a convener, investor and catalyst, LISC Jacksonville partners with residents and stakeholders to coordinate and invest resources that grow community pride and revitalize neighborhoods into healthy, sustainable communities. LISC Jacksonville's accomplishments include:

- Establishing and financing seven nonprofit Community Development Corporations (CDC's) to implement LISC's work
- Financing and Building 2,105 units of affordable housing in targeted disadvantaged neighborhoods
- Creating more than 1.7 million square feet of commercial space
- Creating more than 3,000 jobs
- Providing recreational spaces through fourteen NFL playing fields
- Reducing crime by 40-50% in targeted neighborhoods



## Progress Through Collaboration

Public Trust for Conservation leads green space restoration and enhancement projects through four phases:

“When communities can use and enjoy these enhanced and restored green spaces many will be inspired to become stewards of our imperiled natural resources.”

### ⚙️ FIRST

We assess, identify and contact community stakeholders, partners and government agencies that are invested in their community. We seek collaboration on a shared vision to revive a public green space in critical need.

### ⚙️ SECOND

We help design the project and secure the resources needed to complete it. If we uncover any administrative obstacles or any legal impediments, our team take the steps needed to remedy them.

### ⚙️ THIRD

We organize and carry out the work. Our professional team coordinates and supervises these restoration and enhancement projects to completion. This work can include local stakeholder participation, corporate volunteer work-days as well as soliciting local government resources.

### ⚙️ FOURTH

We commit to a 10-year sustainability plan for each project. Environmental renewal projects need this kind of commitment and long-term investment to achieve truly transformative changes in these neighborhoods.



## Taking Pride in Our Parks

**Call-to-Action:** Your financial investment and long-term engagement will provide a secure base from which local families can thrive. Justice is served when you join our strategic partnership of local foundations, government agencies, and other resourceful entities to create sustainable change in this deserving urban core neighborhood.

### Promoting Community Wellness

Local green spaces spurred a 25.6% increase in people getting active at least three times a week. The wellness benefits extend past encouraging better physical health — parks and recreation areas can also substantially improve mental health.<sup>5</sup>

### Encouraging Social Skills in Kids

Playgrounds at parks do more than provide a structure for kids to jump, climb and slide on. The equipment also helps build social interactions between kids. Additionally, many activities, like see-saws, require a partner. Without realizing it, kids will pair up for play.<sup>5</sup>

### Encouraging Activity in Kids

When kids get to play outside instead of indoors, it increases the positive impact of physical activity. Kids who spend time outside have:

- Better test scores
- Fewer behavioral problems
- Fewer signs of ADHD
- Improved self-discipline<sup>5</sup>

### Offering Family Bonding Opportunities

Because parks have opportunities for people of all ages to have fun, families can engage in activities together. Families that participate in recreational activities together report greater feelings of cohesiveness and happiness.<sup>5</sup>

### Reducing Crime

National studies regularly find that enhanced green spaces reduce crime in adjacent neighborhoods. However, newly renovated parks or recreation areas must have attractive features to inspire pride from the community. When residents use recreational areas frequently, they will help take care of them which strengthens community bonds.<sup>5</sup>

### Creating Social Equality

Parks are free and open to all, regardless of a family's income. Any kid can enjoy the playground and can interact with others. Building parks in lower-income areas gives everyone in these areas a safe place to connect as neighbors. Having a centerpiece such as a playground with inspiring play structures will encourage parents to bring their kids to the park. This in turn will raise visitation, which further enhances the feeling of safety.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.miracle-recreation.com/blog/benefits-of-parks-in-your-community>



“Revitalization of public spaces spurs neighborhood development and creates long-term, sustainable change.”

#### *Budget Summary- Success Park & New Town Community Gardens Revitalization*

Community Garden Enhancement Hard Costs	\$261,558.00
Community Garden Enhancement Installation Costs	\$46,937.00
Success Park Enhancement Hard Costs	\$380,110.00
Success Park Enhancement Installation Costs	\$147,403.00
Long-Term Project Maintenance Budget	\$50,000.00
Project Management, Landscape Architecture, & Graphic Design	\$41,800.00
Fund Development, Marketing, & Communications	\$83,600.00
<b>Total Direct &amp; Indirect Project Costs</b>	<b>\$1,011,408.00</b>

\*Detailed budget available upon request.

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