

REPUBLIC SQUARE  
REPUBLIC SQUARE

# Impact Report

FY 2023 - 2024

DOWN  
AUSTIN TOWN  
ALLIANCE  
FOUNDATION



AUSTIN  
PARKS  
FOUNDATION

This report reflects the activities of Downtown Austin Parks, LLC for the FY24 fiscal year: Oct. 1, 2023—September 30, 2024. Downtown Austin Parks, LLC is a nonprofit managed by the Downtown Austin Alliance Foundation, the nonprofit charitable foundation of the Downtown Austin Alliance. Downtown Austin Parks, LLC is funded by charitable donations and partnerships, and is responsible for Republic Square's programming, operations and maintenance, which includes environmental stewardship, landscape design, tree care, horticulture and more.



## About the Report

# About Republic Square

Republic Square is the People's Park, reflecting its role as a cherished community space in the heart of Downtown Austin. More than **108,000** people visited Republic Square in 2024, whether to eat their lunch in nature, shop the farmers market, take a fitness class or attend a concert or community event.

Keeping Republic Square vibrant and welcoming to all is a team effort. It's rooted in the Downtown Austin Parks, LLC partnership with Austin Parks and Recreation Department and the Austin Parks Foundation. It's nurtured by expert subcontractors that help keep the park vibrant, healthy and well-maintained throughout the seasons. And the Foundation partners with a diverse array of community organizations, businesses and artists to bring the park to life through inclusive events and experiences.

We acknowledge the area that we call Central Texas belonged to Indigenous Peoples of the Tonkawa, Comanche and Apache communities. This acknowledgment is an expression of deep appreciation for those who were here before us.



# Our Impact

Oct. 1, 2023—Sept. 30, 2024



**108,000+**  
Visitors



**90,000+**  
Attendees at Free  
Public Activities



**214**  
Community  
Events



New Trees,  
Mulched  
Pathways and  
Rain Gardens



New Overnight  
Security Patrol

## Spotlight: Heritage Preservation Grant

In partnership with Mexic-Arte Museum, our team successfully advanced the milestones of the City of Austin Economic Development's Heritage Preservation Grant through our work on the Fifth Street Mexican American Corridor Banner Project and El Crito. These initiatives celebrated cultural heritage and community storytelling, from showcasing Hispanic heritage to honoring Día de los Muertos. Each project reflects our shared commitment to impactful, community-centered programming.

**11**

Seasonal Jobs  
Created

**800+**

Local Tourists

**“This project highlights the power of storytelling. The stories of the history and centuries of families who have lived here not only deserve to be told but deserve to be elevated and enhanced.”**

-Raasin McIntosh



# Central to Austin's History

Republic Square has served as a central gathering place since Austin's founding as the Republic of Texas capital in 1839. The first city lots were sold here in 1839 under the Auction Oaks. By the early 1900s, the surrounding neighborhood was home to Austin's original Mexican and Tejano communities. Republic Square hosted concerts, dances and the annual Diez y Seis de Septiembre celebration and neighboring families sold their food in the square—laying the foundation for Austin's Tex-Mex culinary traditions.

Through a unique public-private partnership, the Downtown Austin Alliance, the Austin Parks Foundation, and the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department renovated Republic Square in 2017. Today, the park's programming celebrates longstanding cultural traditions while adding new events that reflect the diversity of Austin's population.



## Market Promenade

A dynamic space hosting the weekly farmer's market, with wide shaded pathways, seating areas and a flexible gathering zone for events.

## Café Patio

A shaded seating area that invites visitors to relax and enjoy the park's scenery while savoring their food and drinks.

## Federal Courthouse Plaza

A community hub featuring amphitheater-style seating, shade trees, benches, and rental spaces for events.

## Main Lawn

A 0.25-acre green space, framed by towering trees and the downtown skyline, offering a versatile area for picnics, fitness classes, festivals and performances.

## The Grove

A tranquil retreat surrounded by lush greenery near the park's main walkway. Overlooks the park's award-winning public art sculpture, Blackbird.

# A Variety of Appealing Spaces

Republic Square offers a green oasis amid Downtown Austin's urban energy. Tall trees, an expansive lawn and native landscaping with wide paths and shaded seating creates the perfect venue for both large events and quiet reflection.

# Our Approach

Downtown Austin Parks, LLC is responsible for Republic Square operations and maintenance to keep the park a vibrant and appealing place to be. Our Foundation also brings it to life through diverse and inclusive programming. We organize and host events with community partners and manage the park's reservation and rental process.



## Inclusive

Republic Square offers free and low-cost public events that people from all income levels can enjoy. We curate a diverse calendar of activities appealing to people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds. Our partnerships with small and diverse businesses and community organizations ensure our programming reflects the city's rich tapestry.



## Welcoming

Dedicated park ambassadors provide cleaning, beautification and hospitality services daily. We manage an overnight security patrol at Republic Square and have also enhanced park lighting to enhance perceptions of safety, especially along walkways.



Photo credit: Marina Wanders

## Accessible

Republic Square features open spaces and wheelchair-accessible paths and seating. It is well-connected via Capital Metro, providing access to all residents. During events like Austin City Limits Festival and Austin Trail of Lights, the park serves as a free shuttle hub for thousands of visitors.



## Sustainable

We prioritize sustainability, using locally sourced native and climate-adaptive plants. Our extensive lawn beautification and garden, soil and habitat restoration processes make Republic Square more resilient to foot traffic and climate change. Lush shade trees protect buildings and pavement from direct solar exposure, reducing urban heat island effects and making the park up to 2-3 degrees cooler during the day.

# Meet the Team

## Hospitality

The **Downtown Ambassadors** are the cornerstone of the Downtown Austin Alliance's direct services program. They have a 24/7 presence in the Downtown Public Improvement District, where they work to remove trash, pressure wash surfaces and beautify downtown through painting and planting projects.

We partner with the Downtown Ambassadors to have a dedicated Park Lead and two rotating ambassadors work in Republic Square from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day. Their focused services here include:

- Cleaning the bathrooms and facilities and maintaining all supplies daily
- Emptying trash and recycling multiple times per day
- Performing daily inspections on fixtures, features and amenities in the park





# Meet the Team

## Operations + Maintenance

**Nudge Design**: Drawing upon decades of design experience, Nudge Design oversees Republic Square's gardening and horticulture. Recognizing that landscapes are inherently changeable, they combine natural landscape patterns with basic principles of art to maintain the park's beauty over time.

**Clean Scapes**: Clean Scapes is the largest Texas-based commercial landscaping contractor. With extensive knowledge, experience and unwavering attention to detail, Clean Scapes works tirelessly to maintain Republic Square.

**Bartlett Tree Experts**: Founded by Francis A. Bartlett in 1907, Bartlett Tree Experts is the world's leading scientific tree care company and maintains the health of Republic Square's trees.



# Meet the Team

## Park Leadership

Our team does mission-driven work every day to make downtown a better place *for all*. Together, this team uses its creativity, expertise and deep love for Austin to make Republic Square a vibrant community hub.

- **Raasin McIntosh**, VP of Active Urbanism, leads storytelling, heritage preservation, cultural partnerships and artistic curation.
- **Emily Risinger**, Director of Planning + Urban Design, oversees park operations, maintenance (O&M), and transformational building projects.
- **Leta Harrison**, Project Manager, curates cultural programming and park activations.
- **Amanda Baez**, Activation Coordinator, manages park activations and rentals, ensuring smooth operations while fostering community connections.
- **Brandon Fahy**, Director of Downtown Experience, oversees Downtown Ambassadors and the Homelessness Engagement Assistance Response Team (HEART).
- **Samia Burns**, Chief Financial Officer, manages budgeting and fiscal compliance.
- **Noah Kligerman**, Director of Accounting, handles day-to-day business operations
- **Downtown Austin Alliance Communications & Marketing** team provides staff support for event promotion, reports & photography of the park.



# Infrastructure & Safety Improvements

## Horticulture Improvements

In early 2024, we closed the lawn for a resting period. We created a large mulch bed and made electrical upgrades to increase the park's capacity for hosting large events.

Additionally, we:

- Planted three new trees
- Added mulched pathways that wind through restored flower gardens and meadows
- Installed three new rain gardens to help capture and infiltrate stormwater
- Oversaw approximately 15 volunteers' work to restore and maintain the park's ecological well-being
- Managed the spread of ecologically harmful plant species throughout the park
- Planted dozens of native plants that thrive in Central Texas, helping to prevent erosion and support the local ecology

## Overnight Security

After a successful six-month pilot program, we established an overnight security patrol in Republic Square. Security guards monitor the park from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. to enforce the city's parks curfew, deter illegal activity and curtail vandalism.



# Park Programming Highlights

# Year-Round



Photo credit: Marina Wanders

## Rosen's Bagels

Rosen's Bagel Co. is open daily at Republic Square, serving fresh, boil-and-bake bagels and the perfect cup of coffee to start the morning. Rosen's is committed to sustainability: all serving dishes, drinkware and utensils are compostable or recyclable.



## SFC Downtown Farmers' Market

Since 2003, Austin's premier farmers market has served the community every Saturday. Featuring over 75 vendors, the market offers fresh produce, pasture-raised meat, local goods and more. Live music, family-friendly activities and community programs create a vibrant atmosphere for marketgoers.

### Available at the Market:

- SNAP Lonestar cards and WIC EBT cards
- Double Up Food Bucks Austin
- Café seating
- Free live music
- Free parking in State of Texas Garage (300 San Antonio St.) from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.



## Records at Republic Square

Republic Square came alive with the launch of Records at Republic Square featuring DJ Kay Cali and friends. This vibrant event became a recurring highlight from October to December, including a special Holiday during the enchanting Lights at Republic Square.



## AfroTech Conference

In November 2023, Republic Square welcomed the AfroTech Conference, which celebrates the intersection of technology innovation and Black culture. It brought together Black professionals, entrepreneurs, and enthusiasts to promote diversity and inclusion in the tech industry. AfroTech transformed Republic Square into Culture Park, featuring DJs, food trucks, a Black Makers Market and a special performance by rapper Rick Ross.

# Winter 2023



Photo credit: Katie McDowell Photography



Photo credit: Katie McDowell Photography

## Lights at Republic Square

The Downtown Austin Alliance Foundation and the Trail of Lights Foundation introduced Lights at Republic Square to expand the holiday magic of the Austin Trail of Lights at Zilker Park. Republic Square, the shuttle hub for the event, transformed into a winter wonderland with lit trees, live music, DJ performances by DJ Kay Cali, SaulPaul, and Akina Adderley and S'mores for guests awaiting their shuttle.

# Spring 2024



## POP! by Gentilhomme

This installation featured five creatures that brought color, sound, and joy to Downtown Austin through our Writing on the Walls program. Visitors could activate these creatures by calling, talking or singing to the monoliths, creating an electrifying show. This project was created by Montreal-based Gentilhomme Studio and supported by the Quartier des Spectacles Partnership and QDSinternational.



## KhushFest

KhushFest 2024, also known as Austin Color Festival, celebrated Holi, a Hindu festival of colors. Attendees threw colored powder, danced to Latin and Indian music and enjoyed art and cultural food vendors.



## Beats, Bubbles, and Babes: Eclipse Edition

Two days before the total solar eclipse, guests enjoyed a DJ showcase featuring a collaboration between @babeatx DJs and @karlalamusic from New York City. This event supported BABE's mission to promote gender diversity in Austin's DJ scene and provided a platform for feminine and gender-expansive DJs to shine.



## Total Eclipse of the Park

Viewers of the total solar eclipse enjoyed performances by IGNITE on Wheels and treats like Rosen's Moon Pie Schmeat. 200 eclipse glasses were passed out to attendees to safely view the eclipse.





Photo credit: Reggie's Rap Room

## Reggie's Rap Room

Reggie Rap's Room is an Austin-based initiative supporting mental health and emotional well-being through creative expression, especially for youth. Over the summer, it hosted several Community Care Celebration events at Republic Square, featuring music, workshops and performances with themes, like Pride and mental health awareness.



## Community in the Park

Community in the Park encourages storytelling from local Austin organizations. Participants enjoyed featured artists and open mic presentations from local creatives and participated in a collaborative art installation.



## Be the Change Day

Through his inaugural Be the Change Day, Austin musician and community leader SaulPaul inspired people nationwide to make a positive impact in their communities. Schools across the U.S., including Oak Springs, Joe Lee Johnson, and Popham Elementary in Austin, participated with over 1,000 acts of kindness.



## Taste of Mexico

Mexic-Arte Museum's Taste of Mexico was held at Republic Square for the first time in 2024, filling the park with joy. This annual event, established in 1998, showcases the best of Austin's Mexican-inspired cuisine, featuring restaurants, food trucks and fine tequilas and mezcals.



Photo credit: YTX

## YTX Yoga Summer Sunset Series

The Downtown Austin Alliance partners with YTX Yoga to offer free Tuesday evening yoga classes at Republic Square every summer. This series focuses on making yoga accessible to all by connecting yoga, music and nature and welcoming all levels of experience.



Photo credit: Swift Fit

## Swift Fit Battle of the Gyms

The event kicked off with a free community workout led by Danielle Gertner, with music by DJ Diggy Dutch. Participants then watched as four local gyms—Trinity Training Co., Orangetheory Fitness, ONNIT Gym and the reigning champions, East Austin Athletic Club, competed for the championship title and bragging rights.

**“[Republic Square] allowed us to bring the community together in [Downtown Austin].”**

-Swift Fit



Photo credit: Violet Crown Cycling Club

## Spindependence Day

The Violet Crown Cycling Club's annual July 4th tour returned to Republic Square for its third year, promoting community and fitness through group bike rides and events.



## Fifth Street Mexican American Heritage Corridor Banner Unveiling

The Downtown Austin Alliance Foundation, in partnership with Mexic-Arte Museum, received a grant from the Economic Development Department to create seven banners celebrating Republic Square's history and the 5th Street Mexican American Heritage Corridor. The banners were unveiled along 5th and Guadalupe Streets.



## El Grito Fiesta de Independencia

El Grito Fiesta de Independencia, produced by Austin Sister Cities Saltillo and Univision, commemorated the 214th anniversary of Mexico's declaration of independence from Spain. The event, also known as El Grito or El Grito de Dolores ("The Cry of Dolores"), recreates Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla's famous cry that sparked the country's fight for freedom. Every year on September 15, the President of Mexico rings a bell and shouts patriotic phrases, leading into Mexico's Independence Day on September 16.

**“Republic Square's rich history and central location give our events a solid foundation to host educational activations and bring vibrancy to Downtown Austin.”**

-MexicArte Museum

# Looking Ahead

We are proud to produce free, year-round community programs. **Our objectives** are to:

- celebrate, educate, and engage the community through a year-long series of cultural arts programs that align with national and local cultural recognition months
- foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and identities

**Future focuses** for our sustained recurring activities include:

- Art (Visual & Performance)
- Culture
- Education
- Culinary Exploration
- Fitness
- Markets & Small Businesses
- Music





# It Takes a Village

Thank you to all of our partners, sponsors and supporters. Republic Square wouldn't be the People's Park without you.

- Austin Parks and Recreation
- Austin Economic Development
- Austin Transportation and Public Works
- Art in Public Places Program
- Austin Parks Foundation
- Austin Center for Events
- Bartlett Tree Experts
- Block by Block
- CapMetro
- Clean Scapes
- Nudge Design
- Prism Electric
- 2Spirit2Queer
- AFROTECH
- Austin Trail of Lights Foundation
- Blue Starlite Cinema
- Brown Boy Productions
- DJ Kay Cali
- DPR Construction
- Encotech Engineering
- Gentilhomme
- Jack World
- Lincoln Properties, Inc.
- Mexic-Arte Museum
- Quartier des Spectacles Partnership
- Rosen's Bagels
- Saul Paul Foundation
- Shaolin Jazz
- Sustainable Food Center
- Swift Fit
- YTX Yoga



✉ [RepublicSquare@DowntownAustin.com](mailto:RepublicSquare@DowntownAustin.com)

f [@RepublicSquare](#)

📷 [@RepublicSqATX](#)

**Support the Park**

**Learn more at [republicsquare.org](http://republicsquare.org)**