

Implementation of a Parks Prescription Program in Austin, TX: Increasing Access and Engagement through Social Media

Background

- In Austin, the areas most affected by physical inactivity are shown in dark purple (Figure 1)
- Previous studies have shown park utilization and increased physical activity is a method to combat obesity rates²
- The Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) maintains outdoor activities, resources, and health promotions
- A Parks Prescription Program encourages physical activity combined with medication
- Social media can reach a greater audience since patients typically spend more time on their phones than in a physician's office³

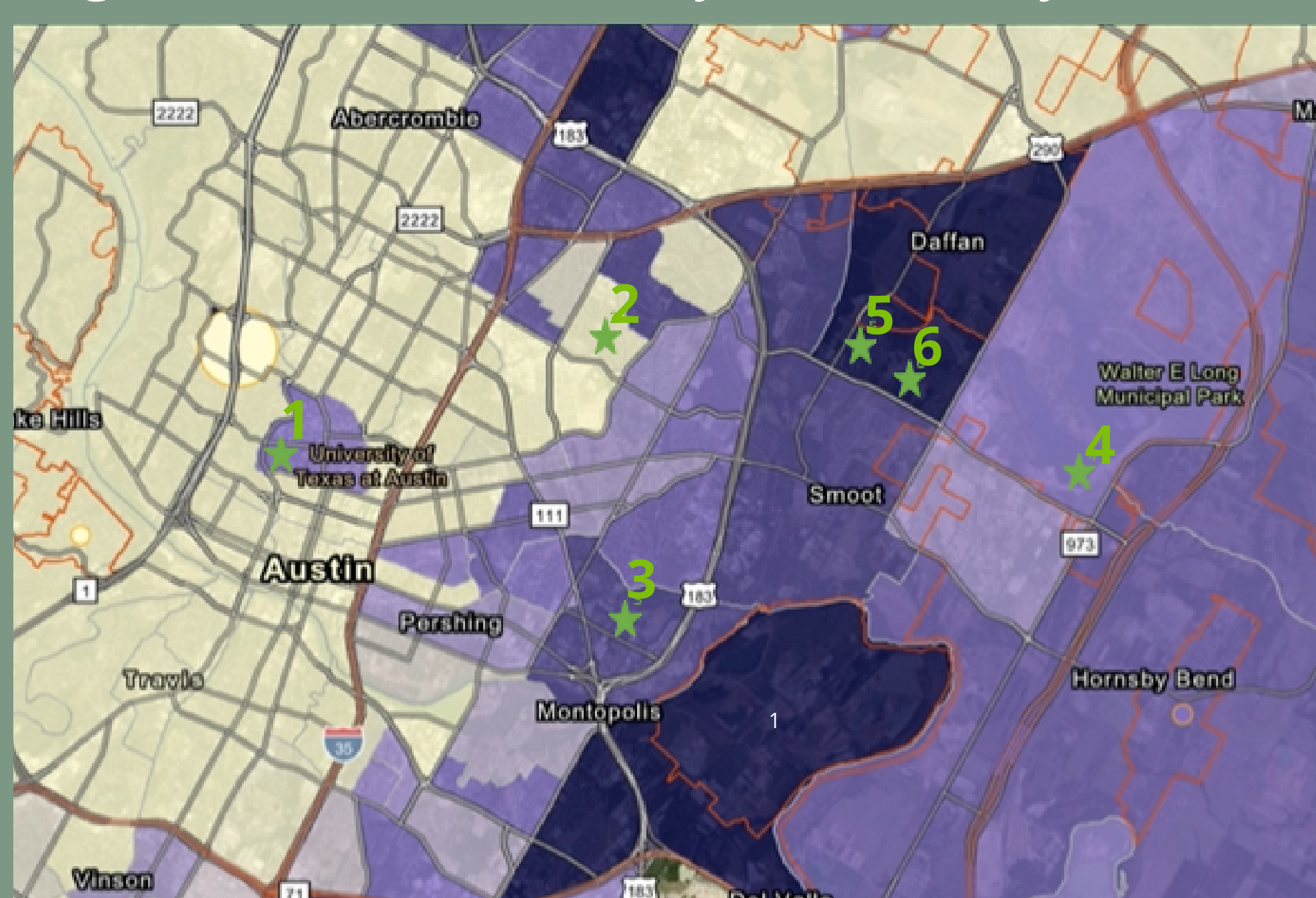
Objectives

- Highlight underutilized neighborhood parks via social media
- Reduce physical inactivity and obesity through increased awareness, education, and a strong call to action

Methods

- 6 parks were chosen based on proximity to a bus route, high rates of obesity and physical inactivity, and low socioeconomic status (Figure 1)
- In collaboration with PAR, the team designed and implemented content to highlight existing park amenities
- Measured engagement through survey responses and views/interactions on various PAR social media accounts

Figure 1: Prevalence of Physical Inactivity in Austin



1. Pease Park; 2. Bartholomew District Park; 3. Govalle Neighborhood Park
4. Lake Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park; 5. Davis White Neighborhood Park;
6. Colony Park District Park
Map from CDC Places¹

Outcomes

- Created and uploaded 6 family-friendly park activities and workouts to PAR's health promotions website for increased access (Image 1)
- Created a logo for PAR in collaboration with the graphic design team
- Created and uploaded videos and posts to showcase lesser-known Austin parks on various PAR social media accounts
 - Introduced Austinites to neighborhood parks and encouraged them to visit
- Posted physical signs with a QR code survey in 6 parks
 - Accumulated total of: 103 responses, 54 park feedback responses
 - Created statistical representation of park utilization (Figure 2)
- Engagement as of 04/14 is 32,000+ views on Instagram reels
- Survey Responses:
 - 72 before social media posts
 - 100+ after social media posts



Image 1: Park Activity Sheet



Conclusion

- This project resulted in the creation of educational materials and social media posts highlighting existing resources offered by Austin PAR to increase utilization and improve health outcomes
- Increased engagement on PAR's social media accounts
- Social media channels and survey results continue to be monitored for engagement and usage data
- Future projects can use this information to identify specific needs or barriers to park access within these communities

96% of survey responders would visit the park again!

Acknowledgment

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References

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Figure 2: Characterization of Park Usage

