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**DC Department of Parks and Recreation, District Department of Transportation and Building Bridges Across the River Announce $15 Million Department of the Interior Grant**

**for the 11th Street Bridge Park and Reaching Full Funding Milestone for its Construction**

*Land and Water Conservation Fund’s Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program grant fulfills last of $92 million fundraising goal*

**Washington, D.C. –** Today, DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and Building Bridges Across the River announced the [11th Street Bridge Park](https://buildingbridgesdc.org/11th-street-bridge-park/) was awarded a $15 million grant from the Department of the Interior Land and Water Conservation Fund’s [Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/outdoor-recreation-legacy-partnership-grants-program.htm) (ORLP). The grant, focused on park projects in underserved communities, marks a significant milestone by securing the full $92 million needed for the construction of the 11th Street Bridge Park. With the completion of the park’s construction goal, Building Bridges is pivoting its fundraising goals towards a $10 million operations reserve budget to ensure sound financial stewardship of the new civic space.

“The 11th Street Bridge Park is so much more than a park, and we’re proud it was recognized with this grant as the beacon of hope for a more equitable, inclusive and connected Washington, DC,” said Thennie Freeman, DC DPR Director. “By offering a pathway towards inclusive economic opportunity, social unity, environmental engagement, and improved public health, this project is a national model for equitable development for our nation’s parks and beyond.”

[The Bridge Park](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/173zlPwGXKLxg864VOLgs_eIwcT6HnJjv) will be home to 145 native trees, a multi-generational playspace, Environmental Education Center, a hammock grove, a great lawn, 250 seat outdoor river amphitheater, urban agriculture, overlooks of the Anacostia River and gardens throughout the space. All design elements were shaped through extensive engagement with local residents. The intentional design schematic will feature safe access to play, nature, and connections to the Anacostia River. Collectively, these features help counter environmental risks to Southeast DC residents that have historically contributed to a nearly 15-year life expectancy difference between black and white residents.

“Historically, infrastructure has divided our city, but this project is a monumental step demonstrating a physical and metaphoric bridge reconnecting our communities east and west of the Anacostia River,” said Sharon Kershbaum, DDOT Director. “This grant award allows us to repurpose abandoned transportation infrastructure into a vibrant public space that will be added to the District’s iconic landmarks.  The partnership between the District and a community-driven nonprofit will bring meaningful change for residents on both sides of the Anacostia River for generations to come.”

The ORLP grant – the largest DPR has received to date – enables urban communities to create new outdoor recreation spaces, reinvigorate existing parks, and form connections between people and the outdoors in communities with a population of 30,000 or more.

“After 12 years of working with the East of the River community, we’re thrilled to have secured the funds needed to fully realize residents’ vision for the 11th Street Bridge Park,” said Scott Kratz, Senior Vice President, Building Bridges Across the River & Founding Director, 11th Street Bridge Park. “We’ve been committed to ensuring this project is responsive to the needs of this community from day one and this grant represents a promise kept and propels us toward putting shovels in the ground.”

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***About the 11th Street Bridge Park***

*The 11th Street Bridge Park, a partnership between the District Department of Transportation and the Ward 8 non-profit Building Bridges Across the River, will be Washington, D.C.'s first elevated public park. Located on the piers of the old 11th Street Bridge, this venue will be a space for healthy recreation, environmental education, and the arts and has been implementing community-driven equitable development strategies since 2016. The project works with community and local partners to invest in the residents and neighborhoods surrounding the Park with various initiatives and support programs. Pre-construction began in 2016, a solicitation for a general contractor is expected in late 2024, and the Bridge Park will open in 2027. To learn more about 11th Street Bridge Park and receive updates on its design, please visit ​*[*here*](http://www.bridgepark.org)*​.*